

3rd June 2016

Press Statement by
Y.A.B. TUAN LIM GUAN ENG
CHIEF MINISTER OF PENANG

at the Official Opening Ceremony of Package 12, Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant.

MANAGE RAW WATER RESOURCES IN THE NORTHERN REGION ON A REGIONAL BASIS

Billions of ringgit, as well as the lives and livelihoods of more than 4 million people are at stake.

PENANG, Friday (3/6/2016): The Federal Government must step in to efficiently manage all raw water resources in the Northern Region so as to ensure the success of the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER).

It is the responsibility of the Federal Government to overcome regional raw water issues, as well as to address the challenges of increasing raw water demand that would affect future progress in Perlis, Kedah, Penang and North Perak.

According to the Federal Government, the goal of the NCER is “to become a world-class economic region by 2025, by leveraging on the inherent strengths of the region”.

However, to become a world-class economic region, we must have ‘water security’.

In this context, water security refers to the overall availability, stability and sustainability of sufficient water supply to meet the needs of the regional community.

If regional growth is truly the priority, we should collectively “leverage” on all the raw water resources in the Northern Region for mutual benefit. All regional raw water resources must be protected, optimised and shared amongst all states in the region because water is an indispensable element for life and progress in the NCER.

According to the Department of Statistics, the combined economic output of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak accounted for 15.8% of the National GDP in 2014.

In all 4 Northern States, the manufacturing, services, tourism, property development and agricultural sectors are dependent on continuous good water supply.

If there is no water, or not enough water, the economy will suffer.

Most importantly, 4 million people who live in the Northern Region need sufficient water every day. Everyone needs sufficient water to drink, bathe, cook, wash and clean daily.

Therefore, the well-being of people in the NCER is also very dependent on regional raw water security.

As such, Penang has tabled 3 key recommendations during a National Water Resources Council meeting chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister in the Parliament House on 26th May 2016. Our recommendations are to:

- Implement the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS), as the 'one solution for two states' that would guarantee raw water security in North Perak and Penang until 2050;
- Ban all logging activities in the Ulu Muda catchment areas that collect raw water for Perlis, Kedah and Penang. Instead, the Federal Government should convince Kedah to gazette the Ulu Muda water catchments immediately, and then compensate Kedah for protecting and preserving the catchments for the benefit of 3 states.
- Protect, optimise and share all raw water resources (including all catchments, streams and rivers) in the Northern Region for the benefit of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak.

The Federal Government is the only authority that has the power to manage regional raw water resources at regional level.

So, will the Federal Government take action to guarantee water security for all in the Northern Region?

With billions of ringgit, as well as the lives and livelihoods of 4 million people at stake, we hope that they will act quickly, and with the *rakyat's* best interests at heart.

Meanwhile, the Penang State Government and PBAPP are ready to provide advice and assistance as necessary.

NO WATER RATIONING AND THE SUNGAI DUA WTP

The Sungai Dua WTP is a critical water supply installation that produces more than 80% of the treated water supplied in Penang daily. It is the primary frontline water supply asset that has helped us to avoid water rationing at all costs in Penang.

As such, the commissioning of Package 12 is a welcome development to ensure no rationing in the future. This latest upgrade boosts the treatment capacity of the plant up to 1,228 million litres per day (MLD).

This year, Super El Niño caused water shortages throughout Malaysia. Some states have had to implement water rationing in some areas in April 2016.

In Penang, we do not plan for rationing. We plan and work to avoid rationing.

As such, even during a long dry season that stretched over 5 months since January 2016, there has been no rationing in Penang.

With this in mind, I commend the PBAPP team for successfully taking on the challenge of “no rationing at all costs.” Above everything else, this is PBAPP’s biggest achievement so far in 2016.

Thank You.

Contact : Puan Syarifah Nasywa bt Syed Feisal Barakbah
Corporate Communications Unit
Tel : 04-200 6607
Email : syarifah@pba.com.my