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PRESS STATEMENT

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HOW MANY DAYS CAN THE MUDA DAM AND THE BERIS DAM LAST?

PENANG, MON, 18/4/2016: How long, in terms of days, can the Muda Dam and the Beris Dam continue to release water into Sungai Muda if there is no rain?

Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) is primarily concerned with the sustainability of the water level in Sungai Muda.

The Muda Dam and the Beris Dam are the only two dams in Kedah that release water to sustain the level of Sungai Muda during this 'Super El Niño' season.

As we understand it, the effective capacities of the Muda Dam and Beris Dam were 43.9% and 37.5% respectively on 15th April 2016.

In a Sunday Star news report dated 17th April 2016, Kedah State Exco Member Datuk Badrol Hisham Hashim was quoted as saying that the total capacity of 5 dams in Kedah was still sufficient to supply water for domestic and agriculture use.

It should be noted that 2 of the 5 dams mentioned, the Pedu Dam and the Ahning Dam, are part of the Sungai Kedah system, and not the Sungai Muda system. Meanwhile, another dam, the Padang Saga Dam is a dam in Langkawi.

Only the Muda Dam and the Beris Dam are releasing water directly into the Sungai Muda system so that 14 Kedah water treatment plants and PBAPP may draw sufficient water to meet dry weather demands daily.

The Sunday Star report stated that on Friday, **the water level of the Muda Dam was 93.86m (or 5.5m above the minimum level 88.36m) and the level of the Beris Dam was at 77.27m (or 9.27m above minimum level 68.0 m).**

In the same report, a spokesman of the Beris Dam management was quoted as saying that **the water level had not reached a critical stage.**

In view of these disclosures, on behalf of Penang, PBAPP would like to raise 3 key questions:

- 1. Based on present reserves, how many days can the Muda Dam and the Beris Dam continue to release water into Sungai Muda for water supply and irrigation purposes?**
- 2. What is the meaning or definition of “critical stage” vis-à-vis the Beris Dam?**
- 3. What are Kedah’s contingency plans if or when the levels of Muda Dam and the Beris Dam fall below the “minimum levels”?**

ACT NOW TO AVOID A CRISIS

Insofar as PBAPP is concerned, **we are facing a clear and impending threat of widespread water shortages in Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Northern Perak.**

It is also evident that the threat affects 4 states, not only Penang, and it threatens 4 million residents, or the entire population of the Northern Region.

As such, PBAPP has urged the Malaysian Federal Government to act now to avoid and prevent a foreseeable crisis.

We must not wait for a crisis to happen, and then implement water rationing. The Federal Government must act now to avoid water rationing. We must avoid what has happened in some parts of Perlis and Johor where rationing has been announced.

As stated on 15th April 2016, **PBAPP is proposing 4 urgent measures** to be undertaken immediately:

1. **Initiate large-scale cloud-seeding in the Northern Region.** Without rainfall, there is no way to replenish diminishing dam reserves.
2. **Postpone irrigation activities, if any, in the Northern states to sustain sufficient raw water for water supply.** We have no choice but to prioritise the interests of 4 million people above padi farming until there is sufficient rainfall for planting.

If rationing occurs, it will cause much hardship for millions of people and bring all commercial activities in the Northern Region to a standstill.

3. **Minimise draw down of reserves from all dams to prolong effective capacities to outlast ‘Super El Niño’.** PBAPP has been implementing such dry water controls since January 2016.
4. **Acknowledge the threat now and persuade water consumers to use less water.** Public participation in water conservation will help to prolong the available dam reserves until the rains arrive.

Thank You.

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