

19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

## PRESS STATEMENT

*Dato' Ir. Jaseni Maidinsa,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
PBA Holdings Bhd (PBAHB) and  
Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP)*

## **FIRSTLY, GAZETTE THE WATER CATCHMENTS IN ULU MUDA**

PENANG, Thurs (19/5/2016): The Federal Government should advise Kedah to gazette the water catchment areas in Ulu Muda that collect water for the Sungai Muda River System as soon as possible.

Gazetting of the catchment areas in Ulu Muda that collect water for the Sungai Muda System will serve two important purposes:

1. Protect Sungai Muda as a raw water resource that supports the lives, livelihoods and future of more than 2 million people in Penang and South Kedah. Even padi farmers in South Kedah and Penang are dependent on irrigation water from Sungai Muda.
2. Allow South Kedah and Penang to be in better positions to avoid rationing at all costs during future prolonged dry seasons in this age of climate change. We do not know when the next Super El Niño phenomenon will hit us. However, if the water catchments in Ulu Muda are gazetted and protected, we will be on a better footing to face the next prolonged dry season.

Right now, no official boundaries have been identified or set in Ulu Muda to define water catchment areas. Only after the boundaries are set can we say precisely which areas are “no-go” areas for logging and other forestry-related activities.

This is the main reason why the gazetting of water catchment areas is a critical initiative to protect any raw water resource in the world. Any water supply expert will agree that the preservation of a precious raw water resource is dependent on setting the boundaries, providing legal protection through relevant laws, and enforcing these laws.

In other words, without defining and gazetting the Ulu Muda water catchments, we cannot say for sure whether logging in any specific area will affect the quantity and quality of raw water in Sungai Muda, both in the short- and long-term.

## **KEDAH SHOULD SEEK FEDERAL FUNDING**

The Penang State Government and Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) have stated repeatedly that Kedah should seek Federal funding for the gazetting and protection of the Ulu Muda catchments.

We will definitely support any bid from Kedah to seek Federal funds or grants to protect these areas in the interest of sustaining continuous good water supply in the Northern Region.

After all, in the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan (2011 – 2015), under the heading of *'Building an Environment that Enhances the Quality of Life'*, the Federal Government had stated that it will “undertake initiatives to encourage states to gazette forests, especially the water catchment areas, as protected areas.”

Kedah is the “Rice Bowl of Malaysia”. Gazetting the Ulu Muda catchments will help to ensure that there is always enough water from Sungai Muda for padi farming in Kedah, as well as in Penang.

At the same time, the protection of the Ulu Muda catchments will preserve an important green enclave in the Northern Region that is rich in bio-diversity for our generation and the generations to come, as well as for nature-loving tourists from all over the world.

## **GREATER FEDERAL ROLE IN NATIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT**

Due to recent developments regarding Sungai Muda, PBAPP has called on the Federal Government to intervene in issues related to water security for the benefit of more than 4 million people in Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Northern Perak, via multiple media releases and letters to Ministers.

It is good to note that yesterday, the KeTTHA Minister announced a meeting, to be chaired by the National Water Resources Council, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016, to discuss greater roles for the Federal Government to play in national water management.

This should be a positive step forward to address present and foreseeable future water challenges and issues in the country.

As a small state with limited raw water resources but which contributes significantly to the national GDP, Penang looks forward to more logical and mutually beneficial plans, programmes and projects that will promote sustainable long-term water management in the Northern Region.

### **IMPLEMENT THE SUNGAI PERAK RAW WATER SCHEME (SPRWTS) FOR PERAK AND PENANG**

In this context, we hope that the Federal Government will consider the implementation of the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS) that will benefit two states – Perak and Penang.

Penang’s “over-dependence” on Sungai Muda as its one and only primary water resource has been clearly revealed during this year’s prolonged drought caused by Super El Niño.

In 2015, PBAPP supplied an average of 1014.5 million liters of treated water per day (MLD) in Penang. In 2040, our water demand is projected to reach 1696 MLD. By 2050, it will be 1884 MLD. This is according to the findings of an independent “Penang Master Plan Study for Potable Water until 2050”, commissioned by PBAPP in 2009.

The 2009 study has also revealed that Sungai Muda will be able to support Kedah and Penang’s demands only until Year 2020.

As such, we need a second raw water resource urgently, so that we may become a high income economy that continues to contribute significantly to the national GDP and national development.

Thank You.

---

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