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PRESS STATEMENT

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TELUK BAHANG DAM: CAPACITY IS ABNORMALLY LOW DUE TO LOW RAINFALL OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

- **Rainfall in the Teluk Bahang Dam water catchment areas in the period 1.8.2019 – 31.7.2020 amounted to 4,466mm, as compared to the 3-year average of 6,411mm for the corresponding period in 2017, 2018 and 2019.**
- **The Penang State Government has approved 16 cloud seeding operations to raise the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam, Teluk Bahang Dam and Mengkuang Dam.**

PENANG, Friday, 7.8.2020: The effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam is low due to abnormally low rainfall, as related to climate change, over the past 12 months.

In the period 1.8.2019 – 31.7.2020, the total rainfall recorded at the Teluk Bahang Dam catchment areas was 4,466mm. This amount of rainfall is 30.3% lower than the average rainfall of 6,411mm for the 3-year corresponding period in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

It should also be noted that the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam was already low at the beginning of 2020.

Its effective capacity was 41.8% on 1.1.2020, which was 50.3% lower than the average of 92.1% for the 3-year period 2017 – 2019.

The logical conclusion is that climate change has caused less rainfall in the dam's water catchment areas.

As a result, its effective capacity has dropped to 19.2% as at 6.8.2020. This is the lowest recorded effective capacity since the dam was commissioned in 1999.

However, the Teluk Bahang Dam is a large dam. With 19.2% effective capacity, it is able support up to 59 days of continuous water supply services (without any rain), in its service areas. This dam's primary service areas are the township of Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi and areas around Tanjung Bungah.

If there is rainfall in its water catchment areas, the dam's effective capacity and the number of supply days will automatically increase.

Cloud Seeding to Induce Rainfall at Teluk Bahang Dam

Since 25.4.2020, the Penang State Government has commissioned cloud seeding operations to induce rainfall in the water catchment areas of dams in Penang and Kedah, as well as Sungai Muda. This contingency measure was undertaken, upon recommendation from Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP), to "defend" continuous water supply services in Penang and Kedah.

In the period 25.5.2020 – 10.7.2020, a total of 8 cloud seeding operations have been carried out. As a result, the effective capacities of the Air Itam Dam and Mengkuang Dam were recorded at 46.1% and 87.6% respectively on 6.8.2020.

However, there was less rainfall in Teluk Bahang.

Accordingly, another 8 cloud seeding operations are scheduled to be carried out soon. These 8 pending cloud seeding operations are specifically aimed at increasing the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam.

These 8 operations are due to be carried out on days when the weather conditions are most appropriate, by a private company recommended by the Malaysian Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia).

Contingency Plans Implemented by PBAPP since 1.1.2020

PBAPP has implemented the following contingency plans to ensure continuous good water supply services in Penang since 1.1.2020:

1. Monitoring dam capacities in Penang and Kedah, as well as Sungai Muda river levels, on a daily basis;

2. Minimising daily drawdowns from the Teluk Bahang Dam and Air Itam Dam;
3. Maximising water abstraction from Sungai Muda at the Lahar Tiang Intake and pumping the raw water to the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant for treated water production;
4. Optimising water production from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant in Seberang Prai and pumping more treated water from the plant to Penang Island, via submarine pipelines, to ensure water supply sufficiency;
5. Drawing down raw water from the Mengkuang Dam to support water production at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant as necessary;
6. Reducing treated water drawdowns from all reservoirs in the state, from midnight to 6.00am daily;
7. Addressing intermittent water supply issues at a few end-of-pipeline and high ground areas; and
8. Issuing 9 previous media releases to inform the people of low dam storage capacity issues in Penang and Kedah, and to promote water conservation (dated 15.1.2020, 29.1.2020, 14.2.2020, 18.2.2020, 11.3.2020, 15.4.2020, 28.4.2020, 22.5.2020 and 28.5.2020, as posted on www.pba.com.my).

In short, PBAPP has been managing water supply in Penang, 24/7, on a “high alert” status since 1.1.2020.

We will continue to manage our responsibility of supplying water in Penang accordingly. More rainfall has been forecast in late August and September 2020. Penang has also commissioned 8 additional cloud seeding operations over the Teluk Bahang Dam.

Please note that the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam will only increase if there is more rainfall in the specific water catchment areas of the dam. Rainfall in other areas of the state may not have an impact on the effective capacity of the dam.

That said, if the Teluk Bahang Dam's effective capacity drops further, PBAPP will implement emergency measures, as required.

Finally, we would like to appeal to the people of Penang again, to use water wisely until the effective capacities of all our dams are normalised. Your efforts to save water at home and at work will go a long way to avoid water shortages in our home state.

Thank You.

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