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PRESS RELEASE 2

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ADOPTS PENANG'S PROPOSALS TO AVOID WATER CRISIS

PENANG, Thurs (5/5/2016): The Federal Government has adopted preventive actions proposed by Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) to address the potential threat of a water crisis in North Malaysia.

Penang Deputy Chief Minister II Y.B. Prof. Dr. P. Ramasamy said Penang was relieved to note that the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA) had heeded and acted positively on Penang's recent calls for action.

"It is good that they have adopted the preventive measures proposed by Penang for the benefit of 4 million people and thousands of businesses in the 4 Northern States," he said at the opening ceremony of the R3 Reservoir in the PBAPP Jawi Reservoir Compound today. The event was hosted at the PBAPP Jawi Customer Care Centre in Seberang Prai Selatan.

26th APRIL 2016 MEETING IN PUTRAJAYA

PBA Holdings Bhd and PBAPP Chief Executive Officer Dato' Ir. Jaseni Maidinsa said KeTTHA chaired a meeting in Putrajaya on 26th April 2016.

Other than PBAPP, the other organisations who were represented were: MADA (the Muda Agriculture Development Authority), MET Malaysia (the Malaysian Meteorological Department), LSANK (Lembaga Sumber Air Negeri Kedah), SAP (Syarikat Air Perlis), LAP (Lembaga Air Perak), MOA (the Ministry of Agriculture) and SPAN, (the National Water Services Commission).

"As we understand it, the meeting agreed to adopt all of Penang's recommendations to ensure water supply sufficiency in the Northern Region until the end of the 'Super El Niño' season in June 2016," he said.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES IMPLEMENTED

On 14th and 15th April 2016, Penang Chief Minister YAB Tuan Lim Guan Eng and Dato' Ir. Jaseni made announcements that more than 4 million people in 4 states, including Penang, were being threatened by a potential water supply crisis caused by 'Super El Niño'.

This phenomenon had caused a prolonged drought and reduced rainfall in the Northern Region of Malaysia in April 2016.

The reserves of the Muda Dam and Beris Dam in Kedah that are releasing water into Sungai Muda during this prolonged dry season had dropped to below 40%, and could only last about 30 days.

More than 80% of Penang's raw water is sourced from Sungai Muda daily. 14 Kedah water treatment plants also abstract water from the river.

On 23rd April 2016, Dato' Ir. Jaseni said the Penang State Government and PBAPP had sent 6 letters to Federal Authorities, including the Deputy Prime Minister (as Chairman of the National Water Resources Council), recommending the following 4 preventive measures:

- Postponement of padi irrigation activities,
- Implementation large-scale cloud seeding,
- Reduction of water releases to prolong dam reserves, and
- Encouraging the people to conserve water.

"In the KeTTHA meeting on 26th April 2016, Kedah agreed to postpone irrigation in the Sungai Muda system. Without irrigation, the Muda Dam and the Beris Dam are releasing less water and their reserves will last longer. Cloud seeding is on-going, and we have had more rain in the past week. The public is now aware of the importance of conserving water," Dato' Ir. Jaseni said.

"On behalf of PBAPP, I thank KeTTHA and all the organisations that attended the meeting on 26th April 2016 in Putrajaya for accepting the facts and making the right decisions. You have done the right things in striving to avoid a potential catastrophe in North Malaysia," he added.

NOT OUT OF THE DANGER ZONE YET

However, Y.B. Prof. Ramasamy pointed out that the levels of Penang’s dams, as well as that of the Muda Dam and the Beris Dam, were still low.

“We are not out of the danger zone yet. Only heavy and consistent rainfall can replenish the reserves of all the dams in Penang, in the Northern Region, and throughout the country.

“Widespread cloud seeding operations must continue on a non-stop basis, so as to induce heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and North Perak,” he said.

Y.B. Prof. Ramasamy said the Penang State Government and PBAPP would continue to be vigilant, proactive and professional in managing the potential threat of a water supply crisis.

“We do not want what has happened at Perak’s Bukit Merah Dam, one of the oldest dams in the country, to happen in Penang.

“We hope that the Federal Government will also continue to act positively on this matter for the benefit of the Northern Region - one of the most important and significant regions in our country,” he added.

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