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HOPE FOR A NEW ERA IN REGIONAL RAW WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- **Raw water resources should be managed on a regional basis to ensure long-term water supply security for the northern region states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak.**
- **The Penang State Government and PBAPP are looking forward to working with the new Malaysian Federal Government and neighbouring states on sustainable and people-friendly solutions.**

PENANG, Thursday, 28/6/2018: The Penang State Government and Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) hope to work with the new Malaysian Federal Government and other northern states to implement regional raw water resource management programmes for mutual benefit.

The total population of Perlis, Perak, Penang and Perak is about 6.69 million people, according the latest demographic findings published by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (www.dosm.gov.my)

With a growing population and increasing diversification in socioeconomic activities, regional raw water demand will continue to increase. In Penang, for example, water demand increased by about 11.0% in the past 10 years, from an average of 744 million litres per day (MLD) in 2008 to 826 MLD in 2017.

As such, a regional raw water management programme must be drafted and implemented to better protect and manage important raw water resources, such as:

- The 163,103-hectare Greater Ulu Muda Forest Reserve in Kedah that serves as the primary water catchment area for Perlis, Kedah and Penang;

- The Sungai Muda Water System with 8 irrigation intakes and 15 water supply intakes in Kedah and Penang; and
- Sungai Perak, a relatively under-optimised raw water resource that may be tapped to meet the water supply needs of North Perak and Penang until Year 2050.

Since 2008, PBAPP has worked together the Penang State Government to highlight the importance of:

- Banning all logging activities in Ulu Muda and gazetting Ulu Muda as a regional water catchment area for Perlis, Kedah and Penang;
- Better coordinated raw water releases from the Muda Dam and Beris Dam Sungai Muda Water System for the benefit of Kedah and Penang, especially during dry seasons; and
- Implementing the proposed Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS) for the benefit North Perak and Penang.

PBAPP has also proposed the drafting of a northern region raw water crisis plan to minimise the risks of a regional water crisis during prolonged dry spells caused by climate change, such as the 2016 Super El Niño phenomenon.

In the past, PBAPP and the Penang State Government have raised these concerns and issues to various Federal authorities, including the National Water Resources Council (MSAN); the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA); the Ministry of Natural Resources (NRE); and the National Water Services Commission (SPAN).

The previous Federal Government did not take any action to address these issues and concerns.

A NEW FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND NEW STATE GOVERNMENTS

A new and more people-friendly Federal Government, led by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, is in office at Putrajaya following the results of the momentous 9/5/2018 General Election.

Following the eventual appointment of new ministers to head the KeTTHA and NRE portfolios, PBAPP and the Penang State Government will re-submit proposals related to Ulu Muda, Sungai Muda and the SPRWTS.

PBAPP also hopes to be able to present its proposals to the new MSAN, which will be chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, YB Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah binti Wan Ismail.

At the same time, we will support new "raw water talks" between the new Penang State Government and the new Kedah State Government regarding Ulu Muda and Sungai Muda; and with the new Perak State Government regarding the SPRWTS.

NEW HOPE FOR WATER SUPPLY SECURITY TOWARDS 2050

The results of Malaysia's 14th General Election in 2018 have provided the Malaysian people with new hope to build a stronger and more equitable nation.

PBAPP is hopeful that the new Federal Government, as well as the new State Governments of Kedah and Perak, will be more receptive and responsive to regional raw water management proposals that are sustainable and people-friendly.

It should be noted that water is an essential element for daily life and socioeconomic development. In Penang, PBAPP supplies water to more than 1.76 million people and thousands of businesses. The future of Penang and its people are dependent on long-term water supply security.

As such, PBAPP is ready to work with the Malaysian Federal Government, as well as our neighbouring states, to achieve water supply security towards Year 2050, not only for Penang, but for the entire northern region, for the benefit of a regional population of 6.69 million people.

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