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Litterbugs to do community service

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Cabinet today asked the Housing and Local Government Ministry to direct all local authorities to make litterbugs perform community service as a punishment for their offence.

The Cabinet agreed with the Ministry's proposal that a legislation on the matter be drawn up with immediate effect, Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh said today.

The draft proposal will be incorporated under the Solid Waste Management Bill which will be tabled in the Parliament soon.

"As to when the Bill will be passed depends on the negotiations between the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department and consortiums who are successful bidders of the waste management privatisation project."

Last Monday, Ting had said that litterbugs caught throwing rubbish in public areas would be instructed to perform community service while wearing T-shirts bearing the words, "I am a litterbug".

They will have to sweep public places and pick up rubbish.

The mandatory penalty was seen as the last resort to educate litterbugs, especially after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed disgust over the bad habits of litterbugs.

At a Press conference before chairing his Ministry's post-Cabinet meeting at his office, Ting also urged local authorities to impose maximum fines on litterbugs.

Currently, the amounts differ from one local authority to another, but it is believed to be between RM500-RM1,000.

"They can continue to use their discretion in imposing the fine, but we would encourage them to impose maximum fine as a deterrent."

"Stiffer penalties alone are not a solution as people will continue to dump rubbish whenever enforcement is lacking.

"The people have simply refused to change their attitude or mindsets," he said.

Ting said his Ministry had also directed local authorities to place more rubbish bins at strategic locations.

"This is to justify claims by litterbugs that their actions were prompted by lack of garbage bins.

"We have also instructed local authorities to terminate the services of garbage contractors who have failed to carry out their duties."

On the anti-dengue campaign, Ting said the campaign had shown positive result with all the State Governments, except Sabah, setting up their own State-level action committees.

Between July 28 and last Saturday, 120,993 sites had been inspected, including 115,864 residential houses and 785 construction sites.

Of this, 2,968 sites were found to be the breeding ground of the aedes larvae. A total of 1,512 compounds have also been issued with RM43,775 in fine collected.

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