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New anti-litterbug law likely next year

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MALACCA, Mon. - The proposed law on solid waste management which incorporates punishment for litterbugs to do compulsory community service is expected to be implemented next year, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh said today.

He said the Solid Waste Management Bill was being drafted by the Economic Planning Unit and the ministry. The ministry is also getting the required views from the four consortiums dealing with the privatisation of solid waste management.

"After this, it will be brought to the Cabinet for approval and later introduced in Parliament. The ministry is confident that the Bill will be passed and will be fully implemented by next year."

Ting said this after handing over a Federal Government grant amounting to RM1.71 million to the three local councils of Alor Gajah, Jasin and Melaka Tengah.

Also present were State Housing and Local Government Committee chairman Datuk Mo'min Abdul Aziz and State Health, Manpower and Consumer Affairs Committee chairman Datuk Wira Gan Boon Leong.

Ting said the existing laws fining offenders up to RM1,000 may not deter them and they might continue dumping their rubbish in the early hours of the morning.

Ting said punishing the offenders to do community service had been very successful in a neighbouring country and this was why the Government decided to implement it here.

"The offender may be required to wear a uniform and pick up the rubbish in public. It is hoped that this public humiliation will be a better deterrent for the people."

Commenting on the progress of a nationwide move to punish litterbugs after criticism voiced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Aug 3, Ting said people were more aware of the need to throw rubbish in bins.

"However, that should not be the case as the people should not only react after the criticisms made by Dr Mahathir."

The Minister said the cleanliness campaign should not be treated as a fad or a trend like the Malay proverb hangat-hangat tahi ayam. Some form of mechanism would be set up by the ministry to continue with the programme, Ting said.

Cleanliness, he said should be made a culture of all Malaysians and it must be the responsibility of all.

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