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Koh-Water

PULAU PINANG MAY SOURCE WATER FROM MUDA DAM

PULAU PINANG, March 5 (Bernama) -- The Pulau Pinang government is working closely with the federal and Kedah governments to implement concrete measures to overcome the tight water supply situation caused by the present dry spell.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said besides coordinating efforts for direct pumping of water from lower Sungai Muda at the Pulau Pinang-Kedah border, the state was discussing the possibility of sourcing water from the Muda Dam.

"In the past three days, I have discussed these proposals directly with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Agriculture Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Drainage and Irrigation Department director-general Keizrul Abdullah," he said.

All of them have agreed to assist Pulau Pinang and have directed senior officers to work out the technical details and arrangements, he told a news conference.

Koh said Sungai Muda supplied almost 80 per cent of water used for domestic, trade and industrial purposes in Pulau Pinang, and 100 per cent in Sungai Petani and neighbouring districts in Kedah.

He said in the last two months, because of the dry spell, Sungai Muda's water flow had at times reached critically low levels, posing problems in pumping for both irrigation and water consumption.

"From a normal measured flow volume of around 100 cubic metres per second (cms) at this time of the year and over 300 cms during the rainy season, it has on occasions gone below 20 cms," he said.

Koh hoped that the concrete measures would be implemented within the next 10 days to reduce possible disruption of water supply for domestic, trade and industrial use and for irrigation of padi fields in Pulau Pinang and Sungai Petani.

Total water consumption in Pulau Pinang was about 155 million gallon per day with Sungai Muda contributing 100 million gallons, Sungai Kulim 25 million gallons and other catchment areas 30 million gallons.

Koh said the Penang Water Authority had in the past few days already been releasing about 60 million gallons of water a day from Mengkuang Dam Reserve.

The dam now has only 4,700 million gallons of water compared to 5,200 million before the dry spell.

The state government had since four weeks ago initiated a water conservation campaign for all sectors to reduce waste and unnecessary consumption of water so as to avoid a water crisis or rationing.

To a question on whether Pulau Pinang would source water supply from northern Perak, he said the state government was working with the Perak government, the Prime Minister's Department and the Kedah government to discuss a proposal on inter-state water transfer.

He said the proposal which made by a private sector to the three states is now being studied by Economic Planning Unit. -- BERNAMA

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