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Severe penalty for companies that steal water: Samy Vellu

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THE Works Ministry is seeking an amendment to the existing Water Supply Act for the imposition of stiffer punishment on companies which steal water.

Its Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said that the amendment which will ensure that severe penalties are meted to offenders will be first discussed with the Attorney-General before being tabled at the Parliament.

It will take "a long time to be implemented", he told a news conference after giving a speech at a five-day motivation seminar for PMR, Form Four and SPM students organised by Perkhidmatan Pendidikan (Yakin) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The Minister was responding to a question on the necessity to amend the existing Water Supply Act 1997.

Under Section 38 of the Bill, a company which is charged for illegally taking water from a supply line can be fined a maximum of RM50,000; its officials can also face two years' imprisonment.

He said the need for such an amendment is vital especially in the current situation where water shortages exist.

On the National Water Council Samy Vellu said, the council is now preparing a working paper for its first meeting with all the state chief ministers. The date of the meeting he said, will be fixed after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad returns from his visit to Cairo.

The Council he said, is also working on reports of the new water sources including the locations of dams and how reticulation can be carried out.

"I have asked an engineering consultant to prepare for the full reports within four months," said Samy Vellu and added that local geologists have identified new water sources in Banting and are preparing to tap them.

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