

Waterworks dept taken. to task

It has failed on many points, say consumer groups

SUN 26 OCT 2001

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PETALING JAYA, Thurs: Four consumer groups have taken the Selangor Waterworks Department (JBAS) to task for what they claim as failure to provide clean water to consumers.

The groups are the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca), Education and Research Association for Consumers (Era), Consumer Association of Klang and Selangor and Federal Territory Consumers Association.

They claimed that 90% of consumers in the Klang Valley used water filters and mineral pots to get clean water.

Fomca vice-president N. Marimuthu, speaking on their behalf,

said consumers have doubts over the department's service.

Marimuthu, who is also Era president, said the groups had sent a memorandum to the department. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad early this month seeking clarification.

Among the issues highlighted in the memorandum were poor customer service, new water tariffs, increase in infrastructure cost, poor debt collection, no monthly bill, poor quality of water, corporatisation of JBAS and public education on water conservation.

The groups will also conduct a signature campaign at a public forum on "Water and You" to get support for the memorandum. He said the authorities have yet to

respond to the memorandum.

Era secretary-general T. Indrani said the relevant authorities should take proactive action on water shortage which the World Health Organisation predicted would occur in 2005.

She said based on statistics in 1998, the country's annual rainfall is about 900 billion cu m while Malaysians only use 15 billion cu m a year.

Selangor had a two-month water crisis in 1998 caused by excessive tree clearing in and around the water catchment areas. The effect of El Nino, 50% water loss through bad piping, polluted water sources and poor planning and water management.

She said the groups want a clearer picture from JBAS to educate the public on water conservation.