

17 AUG 2003

Water

FED GOVT TO PROCEED WITH MANAGEMENT OF WATER SUPPLY IN THE STATES

IPOH, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- The federal government will proceed with its decision to take over the management of water supply in the states which have agreed to the move, Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu said today.

He said that the federal government was prepared to explain to the Kelantan and Terengganu governments which had raised objections against the decision by the National Water Council reached at its meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on July 29.

"Supply of water is not a service where we make profits...it is an essential public service," he told reporters after launching a charity food and fun fair at Sekolah Semangat Maju in Kampung Tawas here.

Samy Vellu said that in terms of Perak for instance, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali had agreed to hand over the management of water supply for the future interest of the people in the state.

He said that the federal government would discuss with the state governments on the next course of action over the move.

According to him, the federal government had so far identified sources of water in all the states and the states requiring additional water supply from other states like Negeri Sembilan which receives additional supply from Pahang.

Samy Vellu said that several states had incurred losses amounting to millions of ringgit every year in managing their water supply and the federal government hoped to reduce their financial burden through the takeover.

He said that only four states chalk profits from their sale of water.

The minister said that Kelantan was facing water supply problem and other states with inadequate water supply had already been identified.

"Let's not view this in terms of political mileage...the interest of the people must be given priority," he said.

On another matter, Samy Vellu said that he proposed to Dr Mahathir and the Cabinet two weeks ago that a special allocation be set aside for the repair and reconstruction of houses in the various villages.

He said that a sum of between RM2,000 and RM3,000 was proposed to be given to each household for their houses to be reconstructed the 'gotong royong' way.

The Cabinet had not made its decision on the proposal, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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