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Kelantan-Water

KELANTAN AGAINST CENTRALISED WATER MANAGEMENT

KOTA BAHARU, July 31 (Bernama) -- Kelantan has rejected the Federal Government's proposal to centralise water management.

Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said the Federal Government should only take over water management in States facing water supply problems or outstanding arrears.

"I was shocked at the announcement as land and water are the absolute right of the State," he said here today.

Yesterday Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said all the Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers who attended Tuesday's National Water Resource Council meeting had agreed to hand over their water supply and management rights to the Federal Government.

According to Samy Vellu, the proposal was made by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, so that the nation's water resources could be administered in a more comprehensive and efficient manner.

Nik Aziz said that in principle Kelantan agreed that the Federal Government should take over water management in some States like Selangor as it was facing shortages and arrears amounting to billions of ringgit.

However, he said, certain States, including Kelantan, should be excluded as its water resources were managed well enough to qualify for a RM600 million Federal Government loan to improve its water quality last year.

Nik Aziz said Kelantan Water, the company managing water supply here, was well equipped to improve the State's water quality within the last two years.

Kelantan Water also made profits and will not have any problem in repaying the loan when the time comes in 2007, he said.

Kelantan, he said, agreed with the Federal Government to start a consortium to channel excess water from one State to another because it would allow the State that supplies to earn royalties.

-- BERNAMA

RAR VRN SRI