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Chan-Water

S'WAK YET TO DECIDE ON HANDING OVER WATER MANAGEMENT - CHAN

KUCHING, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- The Sarawak Government has not made any decision to give up its rights on water supply management to the federal government by year-end, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Dr George Chan said today.

"I'm quite sure the state cabinet will decide, but on the whole, we have managed our water supply very well," he told reporters after witnessing the signing of a sale and purchase agreement between INTI College Sarawak and Cahya Mata Sarawak (CMS) Group Projek Bandar Samariang Sdn Bhd.

The agreement is for the sale of 40 hectares of land for the college's new permanent campus in Bandar Samariang.

Admitting that he was in the dark over the issue as he knew it only from newspaper reports, Dr Chan, who is also Finance and Public Utilities Minister, said until today there had been no communication from the Federal Government over the matter.

While the proposed takeover was a good idea, he said many factors had to be looked into before it could be implemented as water management in Peninsular Malaysia was different from that in Sabah and Sarawak.

"In Peninsular Malaysia, the water supply is inter-linked with other states, but due to the vast geographical nature between Sabah and Sarawak, we have to manage our own water supply as Sabah is far away from here," he said.

Previously, the state government had asked the federal government to exclude Sarawak from the move as there was no major problem in water supply management.

"There has been no response till today.

"We need help in supplying water to interior areas, but in town areas, we don't have any problem," he said.

Last week, Federal Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu announced that the Federal Government would takeover the administration of water management in all states by year-end to ensure adequate supply at all times as only four states were making minimal profits, while the rest were losing money.

The decision was made following a verbal agreement reached during a meeting with Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the National Water Council meeting on July 29.

The proposal was opposed by PAS-run Kelantan and Terengganu state governments.

-- BERNAMA

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