

04 AUG 2003

Dewan-Perak (Water)

PERAK AGREES TO WATER MANAGEMENT TAKEOVER BY FEDERAL G'OVT

IPOH, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- The Perak Government has agreed in principle to allow the Federal Government to take over its water management with the guarantee that the current water tariffs will not go up.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali said although Perak did not face water supply problems it, nevertheless, needed RM932 million in Federal loans to build water treatment plants and to replace old pipes.

Speaking to reporters after the State Legislative Assembly sitting here today, the Menteri Besar referred to the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

The Prime Minister had said that the Federal Government would not give loans to States that prevented it from taking over their water management.

Kelantan and Terengganu have refused to allow the take over of their water management -- going against a decision made during the National Water Council meeting last Tuesday.

The Prime Minister had said during this meeting that the Federal Government, and not the consumer, would bear the bulk of the cost.

Tajol Rosli said water supply to Lembah Kinta was sufficient till 2015 with the construction of a water treatment plant in Sungai Kinta -- constructed with a RM170 million loan from the Federal Government.

"However, water tariffs will not remain stagnant for good as production costs will increase. For now, water tariffs in Perak are lower than in Selangor, Johor and Sabah but higher than in Penang," he said.

Tajol Rosli said Perak would also sell water to Kedah and Penang.

Earlier, during the sitting of the Assembly, Infrastructure and Public Amenities Committee Chairman Datuk Ong Ka Chuan said water demands in Perak were 865 million litres a day compared to production capability of 1,128 million litres.

Responding to a question from Datuk K. Munisamy (BN-Pasir Panjang), Ong said demand projection was 1,468 million litres per day for 2010. The Perak Water Board would upgrade production to 1,732 million litres a day till 2010.

He said the State's 8,000km long pipeline, to be replaced by the time of the Ninth Malaysian Plan, would reduce water lost through pipe leakages and thefts, currently at 33 per cent.

The board's profit was RM18 million in 2001 and RM40 in 2002. Among its projects were the Sungai Kinta dam water supply scheme, Tanjong Malim water treatment plant, North Perak water treatment plant, and the Manjung, Hulu Perak and Kerian water containment ponds.

-- BERNAMA

AR PC SRI