

Gov't says no to coal power plants in Sabah
Malaysiakini.com
February 16, 2011

The government has agreed not to build coal-fired power plants in Sabah, said chief minister.

Musa Aman said the decision was made at the recent National Economic Advisory Council meeting chaired by Prime Minister Najib Razak.

"I am aware there are protests against the proposed construction of a coal power plant. Today, it's proven that all the protests have been given due attention.

"The BN government under the prime minister's leadership is a government that always listens to the voices and feels the pulse of the people.

"We have high determination and political will to make the decision which was not easy, namely not to build coal power plants in Sabah," he told reporters after chairing the state cabinet meeting in Kota Kinabalu today.

Musa expressed appreciation on behalf of the state government and Sabah people to Najib who had not only given serious attention to energy needs in Sabah but also showed high concern for the environment.

The proposed construction of a coal power plant in Felda Sahabat, Lahad Datu, to meet electricity supply needs in Sabah east coast has previously received objections not only from local non-governmental organisations but also international activists.

In August last year, the Environment Department had rejected the Detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (DEIA) for the project but Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), in its 2010 annual report, mentioned that "a reviewed DEIA report will be submitted for study and approval" for a 300MW plant.

"The prime minister also understands that among valuable assets that belong to Sabah is its appealing natural environment which is still preserved.

"We need to protect our treasure, particularly the natural environment because it is among major contributors to the state's economic sector," Musa added.

The growth of ecotourism activities and nature adventure tours, he said, depended on how far the natural treasure could be preserved and not exposed to any risks.

He said the government was aware of the problem of energy shortage in Sabah, particularly in the East Coast area.

In this regard, the federal and state governments had agreed to use liquefied natural gas (LNG) to generate power in the state, he said.

"Now, the prime minister has instructed TNB, Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd and Petronas to discuss what is the best and whether we will use LNG.

"The mechanism, the cost we will discuss in more detail later.

"I hope they can make a decision as soon as possible so that the people of Sabah will not have problems regarding energy.

"Although LNG may be more expensive but that's how the BN is, we do it for the sake of the people in line with the slogan 1Malaysia: People First, Performance Now," Musa said.

- Bernama

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/156178>