

DAP raises red flag over looming EDL toll

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As Selangor residents rejoice over the government's recent move to halve toll charges for the Cheras-Kajang Highway, Johor DAP is up in arms over the looming toll implementation for the Eastern Dispersal Link (EDL).

The 8.1km expressway, built by Malaysian Resources Corporation Berhad (MRCB), connects the end of the North-South Expressway Southern Route at Pandan to the new Sultan Iskandar Customs, Quarantine and Immigration Complex (CIQ).

When contacted, Johor DAP chairperson Boo Cheng Hau (left) said the plan is to set up a toll at CIQ with a collection of RM6.20 for one way.

"This is on top of an existing RM2.90 charge collected by PLUS even though it did not build the federal highway linking to the Johor Bahru causeway," he said.

The problem is aggravated as based on the current agreement, Singapore's side of the causeway will mirror the charges on the Malaysian side, doubling a single trip charge from Johor Bahru to Singapore to a staggering RM18.20 instead of the current RM5.80, said Boo.

To add salt to injury, Boo explained, since the EDL toll booth will be in CIQ which is the gateway between the two countries, any Malaysian or Singaporean who do not use the EDL will still need to fork out money for the toll charges.

"I propose that the RM2.90 charge be abolished and 12 sen per km is charged for the EDL, which works out to about RM1.

"This means the Singapore side will also reduce their charges and people on both sides can benefit, especially with Singaporeans coming to Johor Bahru for shopping," he said.

Motion to debate issue at state assembly

Meanwhile, responding to MCA national organising secretary Tee Siew Kiong's scathing attack on him over the issue, Boo, who is also Skudai state assemblyperson, said Tee was trying to divert attention from the real issue.

Tee, in a statement today, accused DAP of paying lip service as MCA had personally worked to hammer out this issue after Boo moved a motion to debate on the issue at the Johor state assembly's one-day sitting on Mar 15.

"Regardless of whether or not we are a part of the state government, we start to work to figure out this problem and MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has also met with ministers and the federal government to discuss this issue.

"If Dr Boo was indeed worried about toll charges, then he should have personally asked Penang chief minister and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng to abolish the Sungai Nyior and Penang Bridge tolls as these promises were made by DAP to the people should they take over the state government," he said.

However, Boo said Tee, who is also the Pulai Sebatang state assemblyperson, had challenged him to bring the matter up at the state assembly.

"I agreed and moved the motion, now I want him to be the seconder as this debate is for the people but he seems to be backing out," he said.

He also denied instigating local NGOs but pointed out that it is necessary for them to mobilise and voice out against the looming high charges.

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