

MB defends gov't move to take over billboards in NS

MalaysiaKini.com

April 26, 2012

By Darwish Zainal

Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Mohamad Hasan has defended the state government's decision to appoint Yayasan Negeri Sembilan (YNS) as the sole agency to manage billboards in the state.

mohamad hasan negeri sembilan mbMohamad told the state legislative assembly sitting that the move would eventually make it cheaper for advertisers and increase the amount of fees paid to local authorities.

He also stressed that the move does not affect billboards on private land and will only be implemented on billboards that sits on state land.

Mohamad explained that the new ruling positioned state agency YNS as a one-stop agency for billboard-related matters while Semarak Media Sdn Bhd has been appointed to carry out the billboard installation works.

"This move will benefit the local council as previously the advertisers paid RM22,000 to RM24,000 per year for a billboard to the media agency. The media agency only paid RM1,800 per year to the local council.

"Now the advertisers are paying much lower rate, RM18,000 per year to YNS. YNS will then pay between RM2,500 to RM3,000 to the local council.

NONE" This move will generate more income for the local councils," said Mohamad, during his winding-up speech for the debate on the royal address.

The menteri besar claimed that the controversy was being played up by those with vested interests.

'Not a monopoly'

At one point, NS opposition leader Loke Siew Fook argued that the move had effectively created a government monopoly, but the menteri besar did not respond to the accusation.

"The idea here is not to create a monopoly but to create a one-stop agency and we want to increase the revenue of the local council," said Mohamad.

He added that the move would also allowed the state government to standardise the installation of billboards.

"Currently the billboards are scattered everywhere and there are no proper designs as well. Some are wood and some are in steel but with rusty steel bars. There is nobody to regulate this," he said.

Mohamad also refuted allegations that Semarak Media Sdn Bhd is a dormant company, stressing that the company had RM1 million in paid-up capital.

"We checked the background of the company and the company has 20 years experience in outdoor advertising," he said.

Competitive rates

Under the new arrangement, Mohamad said that the billboards erected by Semarak Media will be safer because they will have to take up a public liability insurance as well as engage safety engineering

consultants to ensure that the structure is on sturdy ground.

"I was also told by Semarak Media that they will use new composite steel that are rust free for 25 years," said Mohamad.

He said that comparatively, the rate charged by YNS was competitive compared to Kelantan, Malacca and Selangor.

NONE On Monday, Malaysiakini reported on complaints by industry players that YNS, which is headed by Mohamad, had effectively taken over all the billboards in the state and created a government monopoly.

They claimed that the move had also increased advertising cost and their appeals to the state government went unheeded.

The matter was later raised by Loke (right) at the state legislative assembly on Tuesday.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/196076>

