

Exco: DPM's track record on water tariffs found wanting
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Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is not fit to discuss Selangor's water imbroglio because water tariffs were dramatically raised during his nine years as Johor menteri besar, said Selangor exco member Elizabeth Wong.

As such, Wong argued that Muhyiddin should not be chairing the special cabinet committee on the matter.

"In truth, (the deputy premier) has no experience and cannot contribute sincere ideas in water management," said Wong in a press statement yesterday.

Wong added that Johor has the highest water tariff rate in the country.

"The people of Johor face water tariffs that are not reasonable and will not receive free water like in Selangor," she said.

She said the state Pakatan Rakyat government would not allow the welfare of the people to be jeopardised when it comes to water.

Muhyiddin's committee is blocking attempts by Selangor to take over water distributor, Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas).

The committee had also decided to proceed with the RM8 billion Langat 2 water treatment plant, regardless of whether Selangor grants its consent.

Calls for open tenders will begin next month.

Water dispute

The Najib Razak administration and Syabas both claimed that Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya will face a water crisis by 2015.

Putrajaya have repeatedly claimed that the solution to this was the Langat 2 water treatment, which will treat water sourced from Pahang.

However, Selangor is adamant that it will not heed Putrajaya's demands until Syabas - an alleged Umno-linked company - relents and allows the state to restructure the water concessionaire.

The Khalid administration had argued that this was necessary in order to increase Syabas efficiency before all water assets are handed over to the Putrajaya's Water Asset Management Company (referred to as Wamco, or its Malay acronym PAAB).

Under the Water Services Industry Act 2006, Putrajaya will consolidate water services in all states.

All states have since surrendered their water assets to PAAB save for Selangor, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang.

In Selangor's case, the state government warned that water tariffs will increase to unaffordable rates should its assets be surrendered.

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