

DAP rubbishes Umno's no low cost homes claim

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Penang Umno's recent allegations that the state government no longer offers low cost housing at RM42,000 has been rubbished by state executive councillor on housing, Jagdeep Singh Deo.

He said the claims were inaccurate as of the 22,575 units, from the 12 affordable housing projects planned by the Penang Development Corporation (PDC), 850 were priced at RM42,000.

"State policy also requires the private sector to provide 30 percent low and low medium cost units in their projects," Jagdeep said at a press conference today.

He noted that since 2008 until May this year, a total of 12,471 low cost units were built in 64 projects, in the five districts in Penang.

Jagdeep said the selection process enhancement committee had offered 1,188 applicants low cost units last year, while 4,010 applicants will be offered this year.

He was responding to claims by Penang Umno liaison chief and Federal Action Council chairman Zainal Abidin Osman (right) that Penang no longer offers low cost homes.

The former Nibong Tebal MP had said the cheapest affordable homes offered by the state government were flats costing RM72,000.

On Zainal Abidin's allegations that the PDC had build luxurious units in its affordable housing projects, Jagdeep shot back "this again, is wholly inaccurate".

Apart from the affordable housing units to be build, only 227 are commercial units, amounting to one percent of the entire developments. Thus 99 percent were for affordable housing.

The commercial units are only to cater for the needs of the respective housing projects, and more importantly, were not for profit, Jagdeep clarified.

"This is unlike the luxurious and commercial units that to be built in Perda (Penang Development Authority) and JKP Sdn Bhd - two federal agencies projects - which Zainal Abidin has admitted will see them making a profit of RM149 million," Jagdeep pointed out.

'Forgo huge profits'

Furthermore, the Dato Keramat assemblyman said Zainal Abidin has failed to satisfactorily

address the issue of land purpose regarding the Perda and JKP projects.

“These are lands substantially owned through acquisition for public purposes, not for commercial use. The law is clear. The Land Acquisition Act 1960 does not enable the authorities to acquire land indiscriminately without purpose.

“Surely building such high-end housing units at a profit cannot be said to serve the general interest of the community,” Jagdeep stressed.

He urged Perda and JKP to forgo such the huge profits in their projects and make them more affordable, to better serve the general interest of the community.

On federal projects yet to be approved by the state government, a complaint Zainal Abidin made in letters to Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (right) dated Aug 18 and Sept 30, Jagdeep said he was willing to meet the former on Nov 3, 2.30pm in Komtar.

Jagdeep said other than discussing the federal projects, Zainal Abidin must also provide answers to status of affordable houses promised under the PR1MA project and mentioned in Budget 2015.

“We would also like to discuss the status of allocation and approval of applicants for the 1Malaysia Maintenance Fund (Tabung Penyelenggaraan 1Malaysia) low and low medium cost housing projects in Penang,” he added.