

MB: S'gor water problem not in dire straits
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Selangor needs to find another source of water within the next five years but the situation is not as dire as the federal government claims, said Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim.

He said the state government has "gone through the numbers" regarding the state's future water needs and production, and said the federal government's projections are inaccurate.

peter chin"According to the numbers (from the federal government), by today all of you will have to take one bath a week, which is quite nasty in a tropical climate," quipped Khalid to reporters at a press conference in the state assembly.

"Yes, there is an urgency, but the fact is this (strict rationing) did not happen."

Khalid was commenting on an earlier statement today by Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Peter Chin (right), who said the state government was not cooperating with the federal government in setting up the proposed Langat 2 water treatment plant.

Chin said the existing water treatment plant in Selangor is not capable of handling the increased capacity from the proposed Pahang-Selangor water transfer project and if not completed on time, it would force Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya to start rationing from 2014.

Khalid stressed that the issue is not due to the state government's reluctance in supporting the project but rather a difference in opinion between the state and federal administrations.

"We wanted to resolve all water issues with the federal government as soon as possible but the federal government felt that the (Selangor) water restructuring and the supply from Pahang are two different things.

NONE"The state felt it is the same issue because restructuring includes Pahang as a water source, as well as building the plant at Kuala Langat. We need to see this as one issue," he said.

MB cautiously optimistic

Khalid (right) however is cautiously optimistic that the state's water issues can be solved in the near future, with the state government taking proactive steps to engage its federal counterparts.

He pointed out that the state and federal governments and the water concessionaires have so far agreed on "certain parameters", and the gap between the proposed and acceptable price for water supply is "quite narrow".

"The state government is ready to discuss the matter with the water concessionaires and the federal government.

"The state secretary has been tasked with meeting the secretary-general of the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry, so that we can settle this quickly while honouring the powers held by the state and federal governments and the concession agreements.

"What we are aiming for is to get the best water price for the consumers," he said.

Pending the state's water rationalisation plan and the Pahang-Selangor water project, Khalid said the state government has prepared for potential shortages, including sources from lakes and ponds and drilling water wells throughout the state.

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