

Penang to table move on local elections in assembly
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GEORGE TOWN, May 5 — Legislation to allow for local government elections will be tabled in the Penang State Assembly on Thursday.

“The state government is confident that the approval of this enactment will enable the Election Commission to hold local council elections for the Penang Island Municipal Council and the Seberang Perai Municipal Council,” state executive councillor Chow Kon Yeow said yesterday.

He said the proposed enactment was not in conflict with the Federal Constitution.

According to a report in Sinar Harian, he said the state government wanted local government elections as they were in line with the system of parliamentary democracy.

He said local government elections would enable the people to elect those who they believe could serve them well.

Since it was elected to helm the state, Pakatan Rakyat-ruled Penang has been making efforts to return the right of the people to choose their local councillors.

On August 11, 2009 the state assembly approve a motion requesting the federal government to revive local government elections.

The state government engaged several lawyers to seek their advice on the rights and powers of the state government to hold local elections.

Based on the lawyers’ advice, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng wrote a letter to the Election Commission (EC) on March 4, 2010 requesting it to conduct local elections based on a provision in the Federal Constitution.

However, Lim received a reply on March 23, 2010 from the EC rejecting the state’s request.

Lim then said that the state government had not choice but to begin legal measures to force the EC to hold local elections.

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