

Federal Government Sends Letter To Selangor Over Water Issue
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From Leslean Arshad

NANNING (China), Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The federal government has sent a letter to the Selangor government over the water issue, including the proposed take over of water concessionaires, said Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The deputy prime minister said he had responded to all questions raised by Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim in the letter, including the acquisition of all water concessionaires for the proposed restructuring of water supply.

"I had explained to him one by one," he said when commenting on Khalid's statement that that the state government would continue with the restructuring of the water supply exercise if the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry failed to respond to its letter sent on Sept 14 within 14 days.

Speaking to reporters after attending a briefing on the Qinzhou Industrial Park project here Thursday, Muhyiddin said Abdul Khalid urged the federal government to interfere in the matter, but he (Muhyiddin) explained that the matter was not under the federal government's jurisdiction.

"The Selangor government is bound by agreements it had entered into with all concessionaries, and the matter should be resolved through negotiations on the basis of willing buyer willing seller," he added.

Selangor has four water concessionaires, namely Syarikat Pengeluar Air Berhad, Konsortium Abbas, Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas) and Puncak Niaga.

Muhyiddin said the acquisition of the concessionaires would take a long time and if it did not materialised, then only it could be brought to the second level, that is the federal government, as it was responsible in taking over water assets through Pengurusan Aset Air Berhad (PAAB).

The deputy prime minister said in his letter, he also explained to Abdul Khalid on the importance of helping the federal government resolve issues related to construction of the Langat 2 Water Treatment Plant (Langat 2).

He said the state government should not downplay the impending water crisis in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya expected by 2015.

"We cannot make fun of this, he should give his agreement. I do not understand on what basis he wanted to ask the minister responsible first before making his decision. The most important thing he must answer first to the people of Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

"Is that an ultimatum or a threat, it is up to the people to make an evaluation. In this important matter, we cannot adopt a hostile attitude as we are dealing with problems faced by the people. Water supply cannot be considered a small matter," he said.

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