

'Lim broke election promise on water'
Free Malaysia Today
3 April 2014
Oleh Athi Shankar

GEORGE TOWN: Penang's Pakatan Rakyat government has gone back on its election promise not to increase water tariff for two years, said Penang Gerakan secretary Oh Tong Keong.

Oh said Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng Lim had announced in his 2014 New Year message that his government would not increase quit rent, water tariff, assessment rate and business licence fee this year and next year.

"Lim and other Pakatan leaders had cried foul when the federal government exercised subsidy rationalisation," he said in a statement today.

He said the state government claimed it was a "rational and reasonable decision" to increase water rates.

Gerakan national youth chief Tan Keng Liang called on Lim to honour Pakatan's pledge made during last year's general election to keep water tariff low to ease the people's burden.

He said Pakatan had pledged in its 13th General Election (GE13) manifesto that it would work towards lowering water tariff.

However, he added that less than a year after GE13, the DAP-led government was already planning to increase water tariff.

Tan said this would be the third water tariff increase since the Pakatan took over the state after the 2008 general election.

Lim introduced a 24 sen per 1,000 litres water conservation surcharge (WCS) for consumers using in excess of 35,000 litres per month in 2010.

Last year, after the GE13, Pakatan government again increased the WCS rate by 100% to 48 sen per 1,000 litres.

"WCS is a form of water tariff increase because it will indirectly burden Penangites.

"The chief minister must reconsider the plan to increase water tariff and honour Pakatan's election pledge to voters," said Tan in a statement.

Yesterday, Lim announced the plan to increase water tariff because the soft approach to reduce usage had failed.

Lim, who is also the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chairman, said the last water tariff increase was done 23 years ago.

The water tariff in Penang is RM0.31 per litre for the first 35,000 litres, which is cheaper than the

national average of RM0.66.

Even after the increase, Lim said the tariff would still be the cheapest in the country.

Avoiding water rationing

Meanwhile Lim today defended the decision to increase water tariff in the state.

“The Penang state government’s priority is to avoid any water rationing, where efficient and effective water supply and water demand management is essential,” he said in a statement.

“Any water rationing would be disastrous not only for residents but also for the business community” he added.

He said that even with the tariff increase, Penang will still enjoy the lowest water tariffs in Malaysia.

“The Penang Water Supply Corporation or PBAPP had subsidised nearly RM70 million last year to maintain the domestic tariffs to be the lowest in the country at 31 sen for the first 35,000 liters per month.

“This 31 sen is more than half the national average of 66 sen, with the most expensive water being Johor at 105 sen”.

He said the decision was made for the “future of our children by forcing consumers to cut down on water consumption so that our future generations will have a higher chance of avoiding water rationing”.

.

Copyright © 2013 – Free Malaysia Today

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2014/04/03/lim-broke-election-promise-on-water/>