

Johor Disputes Singapore's Statement Over Water Rights

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JOHOR BAHRU, March 7 (Bernama) -- The Johor Government has disputed Singapore's statement which claimed that the state government had lost the right to revise the price of raw water supplied to the republic under a 1962 agreement.

State public works, rural and regional development committee chairman Datuk Hasni Mohamad said the agreement gave the right to Johor and Malaysia to check the price of raw water supplied to Singapore.

"The attorney-general has given his view that we have the right to review the price of raw water sold to Singapore. We do not agree with Singapore's view (that) we have lost the right (to revise the price of raw water)," he told Bernama here today.

He was commenting on the republic's claim that Malaysia had lost its right to review the price after choosing not to do so in 1987.

Singapore Foreign Affairs Minister K. Shanmugan was quoted as saying that Singapore's position was that Malaysia had lost its right to review the water price.

The 1962 Water Agreement provides for a review of the price of raw water supplied to Singapore after 25 years or 1987. And under the same agreement, Malaysia through Johor supplied 250 million gallons of raw water per day to Singapore at three sen per 1,000 gallons.

At the same time, the republic was supplying five million gallons of treated water to Johor daily at 50 cents per 1,000 gallons.

Hasni said it was not a matter of whether the state government reviewed the prices or not, or missed an opportunity to do so in 1986 and 1987.

"As far as the state government is concerned, we want the matter to be discussed bilaterally."

The Johor-Singapore water deal surfaced last month when Hasni revealed the agreements were set to undergo a review after the Attorney-General's Chambers had given the state government the green light to reassess the rate.

He however, said the state government agreed the revised raw water involved bilateral issues

between Malaysia and Singapore, and should be forwarded to Putrajaya to handle.

According to him, the state government had informed the federal government last month, through a note to highlight the issue of raw water price review in bilateral talks involving Malaysia and Singapore.

"Bilateral talks are held regularly in two or three months, and we hope the issue of revision of the raw water price can be highlighted in the bilateral talks," said Hasni.

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