

## **How can government approve toll hikes, ask consumer groups**

**The Rakyat Post**

**October 12, 2015**

**By Rajina Dhillon**

**Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) president Datuk Dr Marimuthu Nadason says with the existence of inefficiencies on highways and slow response time to accidents, there was no need for the hike. He expects prices of sundry goods to increase.**

**KUALA LUMPUR, “They must be mad!”**

This was Malaysian Muslim Consumers Association (PPIM) chief activist Datuk Nadzim Johan’s immediate reaction to the toll price hike announced today.

Flabbergasted by the announcement, Nadzim said it was the wrong time for the government to be making such decisions as Malaysians were still reeling in from past and recent economic events and price hikes.

“How can the government approve this? They should not be thinking about raising the toll prices now. It’s wrong timing with the GST (Goods and Services Tax) and depreciating ringgit. Even the petrol price has increased.

“It’s unthinkable for anyone to take advantage of consumers now,” he said when contacted.

Nadzim said consumers had been suffering for years with paying tolls and this decision would only give the government a bad name and cost them the loss of consumer support.

Furthermore, Nadzim said with tolls being concessional, at worst concessionaires should ask for an extension if the situation was about not having made enough money.

Doing so, he argued, was not a problem.

“I don’t see any reason for consumers to be burdened. Let them settle down,” he said.

Vice-chairman of community group Say No To Kidex P. Selva also brought up the issue of toll concessionaires and said there should be a halt to the collection of tolls for certain highways such as the Federal Highway.

He said over the years, PLUS Malaysia Berhad (Plus) had made “tonnes” of money from the highway, questioning the need to continue doing so.

“Even the Jalan Pahang toll ended. Tolls should only be there for a certain period, not forever. It should not be a money-making machine. They must have a cut-off date.

“So why is it they are still collecting money and who is auditing them? We want transparency on how the money is being spent. How are they improving roads?” he said when contacted.

The Jalan Pahang toll plaza was in operations from August 1995 and abolished in August 2004.

Selva also questioned the operations of tolls along the Damansara-Puchong Expressway (LDP) as the concession would end in about 15 years.

LDP started collecting toll from road users in 1996 with a concession period of 34 years, until 2030.

Speaking on the hike announcement today, Selva echoed similar sentiments as Nadzim, saying that the hike would only add to the burden put upon consumers by the GST and shrinking of the ringgit.

“Maybe the federal government intends to give everyone BR1M. If they are, maybe this is in the right direction. If not, where is the ordinary person going to find the money for all these?”

“Private sector wages have not come up in ages and we are moving towards a fully developed country. Do wages reflect this?”

Meanwhile, Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) president Datuk Dr Marimuthu Nadason said with the existence of inefficiencies on highways and the slow response time to accidents, there was no need for the hike.

“That must be the criteria in evaluating and then upgrading (tolls).

“With this hike, I see two things happening. Firstly, all lorries, taxis and buses will take advantage. Secondly, there will be a chain reaction.

“There will be an increase in fare prices and also sundry goods because of transport. It’s just not the right time.”

Marimuthu expressed hope that the government would review this decision as people were already suffering.

So far today, 12 highway concessionaires in Klang Valley have announced a toll hike of between 20 sen and RM3 effective Thursday (Oct 15).

The new toll rates will apply to Kuala Lumpur-Karak Highway (KLK), Maju Expressway (MEX), Kajang-SILK Highway, Duta-Ulu Kelang Highway (DUKE), and the Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART).

Toll hikes are also announced for the KL-Kuala Selangor Highway (Latar), Sungai Besi Highway (Besraya), and the New Pantai Expressway (NPE).

Lebuhraya Kajang-Seremban (Lekas), Lebuhraya Damansara-Puchong (LDP), Lebuhraya Sistem Penyuraian Trafik KL Barat (Sprint) and Lebuhraya Cheras-Kajang (Grand Saga) later also announced their toll hikes.

**Copyright © 2015 The Rakyat Post**

Source: <http://www.therakyatpost.com/news/2015/10/12/how-can-government-approve-toll-hikes-ask-consumer-groups/>