

16/05/2016 03:17 PM

Stop Ulu Muda logging, federal agencies told

The Penang water authority says Ulu Muda forest reserve in Kedah serves as a primary water catchment area and is vital to sustain water supply for Kedah and Penang



GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) wants federal agencies to take proactive measures to stop logging activities in the Ulu Muda forest reserve in Kedah.

Its chief executive officer Jaseni Maidinsa said this forest reserve serves as the primary water catchment area for Sungai Muda - the main source of raw water for south Kedah and Penang.

"If the forest reserve is further damaged or destroyed, there will be serious consequences in terms of the availability from sufficient raw water from the river," he told reporters during the lunch-break of the state assembly sitting here today.

He added that if the quality of raw water from Sungai Muda was compromised, it will also threaten the quality of treated water supplied in south Kedah and Penang.

It was reported today that the Kedah Water Supply, Water Resources and Energy Committee chairman Badrol Hisham Hashim said the state government was aware of the logging activities in Ulu Muda and those found guilty of carrying out logging illegally would be banned immediately.

Jaseni also urged federal agencies such as the National Water Services Commission, Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA), the National Water Commission (SPAN) and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment to act on logging activities as it will affect the livelihood of more than two million people in south Kedah and Penang.

"Due to its great value as a water catchment, natural heritage area and a potential adventure tourism destination in the Northern Region, the Ulu Muda forest reserve, must be protected by law immediately," he said.

He said quality of raw water has deteriorated due to logging activities at Ulu Muda and it will cost more money to treat water compared with money gained from logging activities.

Meanwhile, Jaseni said the current water level at the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams was still below the expected 60% level hoped rain would continue to fall and fill the dams.

"Penang Island's dams are still at about 50% and we are hoping for it to reach 60% in order to face a potential dry spell coming," he said adding that next year's dry season might be worse than this year.

A check at the PBAPP website showed that the current water level at Air Itam Dam stood at 50.3%, Teluk Bahang Dam at 51.1% while Mengkuang Dam showed 91.7%.

- *Bernama*