

Regional raw water management program needed: Chow

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Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang state government and Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) hope to work with the new federal government and other northern states to implement regional raw water resource management program for mutual benefit in the northern region.

Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said there are about 6.69 million people across Perlis, Kedah, Perak and Penang there is a need to a new program to be drafted to better protect and manage important raw water resources.

"With a growing population and increasing diversification in socioeconomic activities, regional raw water demand will continue to increase, so is imperative to provide secure and reliable water supply to the

region," he said in a press conference after chairing the PBA Holdings Bhd annual general meeting today at Jen Hotel.

Citing Penang as an example, Chow said over the last water demand in the state has increased by 11%, from an average of 744 million litres per day (MLD) in 2008 to 826 MLD in 2017.

Chow who is also the chairman to PBA Holdings and PBAPP said the new program would better manage the 163,103 ha Greater Ulu Muda Forest Reserve in Kedah and the Sungai Muda Water System.

He said the program also improve the under-optimised raw water resource from Sungai Perak which can be tapped to meet the water supply needs of North Perak and Penang until 2050.

He said PBAPP has also proposed the drafting of a northern region water crisis plan to minimise the risk of regional water crisis during prolonged dry spells caused by climate change, such as the 2016 Super El-Nino phenomenon.

He also pointed out that in the past PBAPP and Penang state government have raised these concerns and issues to various federal authorities, with no action taken by them.

He hopes with the new appointment minister in charge to lead the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water and the Ministry of Natural Resources, the state will be able to resubmit the proposal related to Ulu Muda, Sungai Muda and Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme.

"We will also support the new raw water talk with Kedah state government regarding Ulu Muda and Sungai Muda and also with the Perak state government regarding Sungai Perak," he said.

He also assured that PBAPP is ready to work with the Malaysian Federal Government as well as Penang neighbours to achieve water supply security towards 2015, not only for Penang but for the entire northern region.