

## Penang water company says tapping third source to refill Teluk Bahang Dam before the dry season hits

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*PBAPP Chief Executive Officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said they commissioned the Batu Ferringhi Catchment to Teluk Bahang Raw Water Transfer Scheme on October 3. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin*

GEORGE TOWN, Nov 4 — Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) is getting a third water catchment area to refill the Teluk Bahang Dam before the dry season starts in two months.

PBAPP Chief Executive Officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said they commissioned the Batu Ferringhi Catchment to Teluk Bahang Raw Water Transfer Scheme on October 3.

“Since then, excess raw water from the Batu Ferringhi Water Catchment Area, located in the hills about 3.5km away, is being channelled to the dam,” he said in a statement today.

Now, whenever there is heavy rainfall, excess raw water from four intakes in the Batu Ferringhi Water Catchment Area is channelled by gravity flow towards the dam through an existing tunnel.

He said the raw water from these four intakes was used for treated water production at the Batu Ferringhi Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and the Guillemard Water Treatment Plant under normal conditions.

Jaseni said this means now Teluk Bahang Dam is being refilled with raw water from three water catchment areas, namely, Teluk Bahang Water Catchment Area, Sungai Pinang Water Catchment Area (since September 10) and Batu Ferringhi Water Catchment Area (since October 3).

“The potential yield from the Sungai Pinang Water Catchment area is 10 MLD (million litres per day), while the potential yield from the Batu Ferringhi Water Catchment Area is 7.5 MLD,” he said.

The effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam was at its lowest this year at 16 per cent as at September 5 and it increased to 25.3 per cent on October 10 after tapping the Sungai Pinang Water Catchment Area.

The dam's effective capacity increased to 35.5 per cent as at November 3 after it started tapping from all three water catchment areas.

However, Jaseni said the effective capacity of the dam is still abnormally low due to the low rainfall on the island between September 2019 and September 2020.

He compared the average effective capacity of 69 per cent on November 3 in the last three years as compared to only 35.5 per cent this year.

“PBAPP is targeting to achieve an effective capacity of 45 per cent for the Teluk Bahang Dam by December 31 to prepare for the dry season which is expected to commence from January 2021,” he said.

He pointed out that the dam's effective capacity was 41.8 per cent as at January 1 this year for it to be able to weather through the dry season between January and August this year.

The Teluk Bahang Dam supplies water to about 38,000 consumers in the northern tourism belt areas of Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi and around Tanjung Bungah on Penang island.

Jaseni said it may be the wet season now but they are unsure if the natural rainfall will be enough to increase the dam's effective capacity to 45 per cent by the end of the year.

He repeated his call for cloud seeding to be conducted to induce maximum rainfall in the three catchment areas of Teluk Bahang, Sungai Pinang and Batu Ferringhi.

The state government had approved cloud-seeding operations over key water catchment areas in Penang and Kedah earlier this year but eight out of 16 cloud seeding operations were put on hold since July this year due to technical issues.

He said the state government had sought the assistance of the Environment and Water Ministry on September 24 to liaise with the Meteorological Department to expedite the remaining eight cloud seeding operations.

“As such, these eight remaining cloud seeding operations that have been scheduled for Penang must be prioritised,” he said.

He called on consumers in Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi and areas around Tanjung Bungah to conserve water until the effective capacity of the dam is normalised.