

Penang Water Supply Corporation recommends cloud seeding to fill up dams

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A view of the Air Itam dam March 12, 2021. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin

GEORGE TOWN, March 12 — Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) is recommending that the state undertake cloud seeding operations in 2021 to increase the effective capacities of the two main dams on the island.

PBAPP Chief Executive Officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the objective of the cloud seeding is to achieve a minimum of 80 per cent effective capacities in the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams by December 2021.

This is one of the dry weather measures PBAPP will undertake to sustain the storage capacities of both dams this year, he said.

“In the period January 1 to March 11, the effective capacities of the Air Itam Dam and the Teluk Bahang Dam have reduced by 17.9 per cent and 2.0 per cent respectively because there was insufficient rainfall to recover the daily draw downs,” he said in a statement today.

He said PBAPP needs to draw down the reserves of the two dams on a daily basis to support water supply in Air Itam, Paya Terubong, Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi and Tanjung Bungah.

The effective capacities of the dams are now 77.3 per cent for Air Itam and 56.7 per cent for Teluk Bahang. He said both dams were not at 100 per cent full capacity as at January 1 due to insufficient rainfall in 2019 and 2020.

“Penang is in the midst of an annual dry season, with some rainfall expected in April or May 2020,” he said. He said due to climate change, the amount of expected rainfall in April or May could not be predicted.

Other than recommending cloud seeding, PBAPP has also implemented other dry weather control measures such as daily monitoring of dam capacities in Penang and Kedah as well as Sungai Muda river levels, optimising daily draw downs, maximising water abstraction from Sungai Muda at the Lahar Tiang intake, optimising water production from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant and drawing down raw water from Mengkuang Dam.

Jaseni then called on consumers to conserve water and reduce water wastage during the dry spell.