



No tariff hike until pandemic subsides, says Penang water authority

FMT Reporters May 28, 2021 3:07 PM



The environment and water minister will gazette the newly approved water tariffs when the Cabinet gives its approval. (Bernama pic)

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) says there will be no increase in water tariffs for the time being, following the federal government's pledge not to allow it until the Covid-19 pandemic subsides.

Its CEO, Jaseni Maidinsa, said today that this was after the environment and water minister told Parliament last July that no water tariff increase would be approved in view of the health crisis.

His comment comes after MCA raised objections to PBAPP's application to raise water tariffs, as revealed on the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) website recently. The proposed increase ranges from RM3 to RM109 depending on category. Penang's average water bill for domestic users is about RM5.55 a month, the cheapest in the country.

Jaseni said the tariff review proposal was sent to SPAN two years ago as part of a condition to renew PBAPP's bi-annual licence from the regulator. He said the proposed tariffs were in line with SPAN's tariff setting mechanism formula, which is presently used for tariff reviews in other states, such as Kedah, Perak, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan and Johor.

"When the Cabinet gives its approval, the environment and water minister will gazette the newly approved tariffs for implementation by the water operators," he said in a statement.

'Stop flushing toilet, use pails'

Separately, the Consumers Association of Penang said that while it supports any proposal to increase tariffs to curtail water waste, it is urging the people to start valuing water. CAP president Mohideen Abdul Kader said with the proposed increase in water rates, he hoped more Penangites would save water by checking for leaks, using pails of water to wash cars instead of running water from garden hoses, and flushing urine in the toilet bowl with a pail of water instead of using the cistern.

"A single flush from a low-flow model cistern can use up to 6.1 litres while older models use up to 19 litres. A small pail has a capacity of about 2.25 litres and more than halves the usage. "Also, take shorter showers and turn off the tap when not in use. Commercial buildings should adopt time-delay self-closing faucets," he said. Mohideen said checks at all highway rest areas should be carried out for leaks, as they are often left unattended.

"The increase in water rates should serve as a deterrent to water wasters but PBAPP should provide rebates for the poor," he said.

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/05/28/no-tariff-hike-until-pandemic-subsides-says-penang-water-authority/>