

Penang exco: No water tariff hike in state for now, also decision rests with federal govt

Friday, 28 May 2021 01:30 PM MYT BY OPALYN MOK



Penang exco Zairil Khir Johari says there will be no water tariff hike in the state for now. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin

GEORGE TOWN, May 28 — There will be no water tariff hike in Penang for now, said Penang exco Zairil Khir Johari.

The infrastructure and transport committee chairman said the Environment and Water Minister Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man announced in Parliament in July last year that the federal government will not approve any water tariff review during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Based on the minister's statement, it is clear that there will not be any water tariff hike at this time and the public consultation is mostly part of SPAN's efforts to prepare for a tariff review in future after the pandemic,” he said in a statement today, referring to an online public consultation exercise organised by National Water Services Commission (SPAN) on a proposed water tariff review.

He said the final decision on any water tariff review lies with the federal government and not the state.

He was responding to calls by Penang MCA for the state government to cancel its proposed water tariff review after SPAN launched the public consultation exercise from May 24 to June 6.

“If MCA does not agree to the water tariff review, it should forward its complaints to the federal government as the public consultation exercise is held by SPAN and not the state government or the Penang Water Supply Corporation,” he said.

He pointed out that the public consultation exercise by SPAN does not only involve Penang but other states such as Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Selangor and Labuan between 2019 and 2020.

“In 2021, SPAN launched public consultation exercises for Kedah, Perak, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Johor and Penang,” he said.

As for MCA vice-president Datuk Tan Teik Cheng's claims that the water tariff rates in Penang has increased more than 20 per cent over the last 10 years, Zairil said the domestic water tariff rate in Penang has remained the lowest in the country despite Penang water consumption per capita being the highest in the country.