

## Penang water company promises South Seberang Perai water woes to end in a few more months

By Opalyn Mok Thursday, 02 Jun 2022



*Penang Water Supply Corporation chief executive Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa speaks to the press at the SPICE Convention Centre in Bayan Lepas September 8, 2020. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin*

GEORGE TOWN, June 2 — The frequent water disruption plaguing residents living on higher ground and end-of-line areas in South Seberang Perai (SPS) will be resolved in a few more months, Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said today.

He added that residents will get constant water supply once the short and medium term measures are put in place.

One of the medium-term measures to be put in place is the installation of a booster pump to pump more water to end-of-line (EOL) consumers and higher ground areas in SPS including Taman Seruling Emas, Taman Widuri, Kampung Sungai Duri, Kampung Sungai Baong, Permatang Ara and the Sungai Baong Industrial Area.

"The project will start immediately and should be completed in a month's time," Jaseni told a joint press conference with infrastructure and transport committee chairman Zairil Khir Johari here.

Zairil said there were two medium-term measures that will be implemented by PBAPP through emergency procurement so that the projects will start immediately.

The other medium-term measure is the upgrading of the Bukit Panchor water treatment plant.

"This project is also by way of emergency procurement to appoint a contractor to upgrade the water treatment plant to increase the output by 5 to 10 million litres per day (MLD)," he said.

He said the water treatment plant (WTP) in Bukit Panchor is located in SPS so it will be able to produce more water to the affected EOL areas.

"The booster pumps will be installed after the Bukit Minyak areas so that it could push more water supply to the EOL consumers," he said.

As for the short-term measures that will be put in place, Zairil said PBAPP has been maximising water production at its nine WTP in Penang especially at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant.

"All WTPs in Penang are now running at optimal capacity, 24/7," he said.

Additionally, he said PBAPP is pumping more treated water from the Sungai Dua WTP to SPS to meet the water demand of 32,993 water consumers there.

"PBAPP has been deploying water tankers, static water tanks and personnel to address issues of unscheduled water supply interruptions at EOL and higher ground areas in SPS," he said.

PBAPP has also implemented a water contingency plan for SPS from May 26 onwards which is to prioritise water supply to the 32,993 water consumers for 12 hours from 6pm to 6am daily.

"During this period, water supply to the Batu Kawan and Bukit Minyak industrial areas will be regulated so that more water will be pumped to residential areas," he said.

He said all domestic premises are required to be equipped with 24-hour water storage tanks so the 12-hour water supply will allow the consumers to fill their water tanks and store sufficient water for daily use.

"The problem is that some consumers removed their water tanks, so they do not have tanks to store water," he said.

PBAPP has also made it a requirement for all new factories in the area to be equipped with 48-hour storage tanks.

"The water supply issues in SPS were not due to any major mishap or breakdown in PBAPP's water supply services in Penang," Zairil stressed.

Both Zairil and Jaseni attributed the water woes in SPS to an unexpected increase in water usage in Penang.

"The daily water consumption surged by 10.4 per cent in three years which is almost double that of previously as our records showed that we saw an increase of only 7.8 per cent in nine years between 2010 and 2019," Jaseni said.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, water consumption was 843 MLD but it increased to 931 MLD this year.

Jaseni said the sudden increase in water consumption was unexpected so they were unprepared for it.

Meanwhile, PBAPP will also be implementing long-term measures to increase and stabilise water supply in SPS especially to the EOL consumers.

Zairil said there will be four major projects to be implemented in the long term to increase the water supply to 569 MLD.

The projects are the refurbishment of sediment tanks and a new water treatment module at the Sungai Dua WTP, a new WTP at Mengkuang Dam and the Sungai Dua WTP.

He said the new water treatment module in Sungai Dua is expected to complete by next year while the consultant for the WTP at Mengkuang Dam was already appointed.

The Sungai Muda WTP is expected to complete by 2028.

Last Monday, some 30 affected residents in SPS staged a peaceful demonstration over their water woes that had dragged on for close to four years.