

Penang's water tariff review: Ministry, SPAN should decide immediately

By Audrey Dermawan - June 10, 2022



Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow (right) with PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Ir Jaseni Maidinsa (2nd-right) visit at the launch of the newly-renovated administration centre of the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP). -NSTP/DANIAL SAAD

BUTTERWORTH: The Environment and Water Ministry and the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) have been told to immediately decide on the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP)'s application for a water tariff review this year.

PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Ir Jaseni Maidinsa said they were still awaiting the decision following the application made in March, this year.

Jaseni said the water tariff review was important as a measure to guarantee the capacity of raw water supply in the state, thus educating the people to be prudent.

"At the moment, the domestic water tariff in Penang is the cheapest in the county at RM0.32 for every 1,000 litres compared to the national average of RM0.71.

"Due to it being the cheapest, the usage is high at 308 litres per capita per day, way higher compared to Singapore at only 150 litres per capita per day.

"As such, PBAPP sees one of the ways to ensure the people continue to be prudent is to apply for a water tariff review. This is proven in the case of Singapore whereby when the water tariff is at a certain rate, then the usage becomes lesser," he said.

He said this when met at the launch of the newly-renovated administration centre of the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) by Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow here today.

Jaseni said he hoped for the water tariff review application would not be delayed to allow water supply operators in the country could give their best services and achieve the key performance indicators (KPIs) set.

"In this matter (water tariff review), all states have submitted their applications but the decisions have been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"As such, we really hope that it will no longer be delayed, otherwise, the performance services will dropped. How are we supposed to give the best services if we do not have the funds to do so?" he asked.

It was reported that the PBAPP applied for a water tariff review this year, primarily to raise funds for the implementation of its Raw Water Contingency Plan 2030 (RWCP 2030) projects.

PBAPP had applied for a water tariff review in 2019. However, the Environment and Water Minister had issued public statements in 2020 and 2021 that the federal government had postponed all water tariff reviews due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Malaysian economy.

The last water tariff review in Penang was implemented in 2015.