

## Penang urges federal govt action to prevent repeat of water crisis

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THE Penang government and Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) are seeking federal government intervention to reduce the risk of further water supply problems in the state.

This was in the wake of a recent incident where thousands of Penang households were left without water following the shutdown of the Sg Dua water treatment plant due to the extreme turbidity at Sungai Muda, caused by flood water from Baling.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, in a statement today, said more than 80% of raw water abstracted daily by PBAPP came from Sungai Muda.

He said any incident involving Sungai Muda would affect water supply to about 80% of the population and businesses in Penang.

“The effects of the recent flash floods in Baling, Kedah, have proven this to be a fact. On July 6, the floods (in Baling) caused the turbidity of raw water from Sungai Muda to suddenly increase to 3,000 NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Unit).

“Due to the turbidity, PBAPP was forced to temporarily halt operations at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (LRA). The biggest and most important LRA closure in Penang affected water supply services for six days,” he said.

To minimise the risk of the incident happening again, Chow, who is also PBAPP chairman, suggested for the federal government to set up the Ulu Muda Basin Authority (UMBA) to conserve, manage and protect the Sungai Muda river basin as a water asset in the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER).

For the purpose of developing NCER, he said, focus should be given to water resources as the water supply problem was not good for businesses and would cause millions of people to suffer.

Chow said the federal government should also speed up the completion of the Mengkuang Dam Expansion Project, implement the Sungai Perak Raw Water Distribution Scheme, stop logging in Ulu Muda and prevent Kedah from implementing the Kulim airport project and proposed rare earth mining. – Bernama, July 12, 2022.