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EMD A DROUGHT RESERVE DAM, FEEDING ONLY SUNGAI DUA WATER PLANT - PENANG CM

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GEORGE TOWN, May 19 (Bernama) -- The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) today explained that the Expanded Mengkuang Dam (EMD) in Bukit Mertajam near here is a strategic drought reserve dam that supports only the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (LRA).

Chief executive officer of PBAPP Ir. K. Pathmanathan said EMD is not a 'daily dam' like the Air Itam Dam or Teluk Bahang Dam and it also does not release raw water from EMD when there is enough water to be abstracted from Sungai Muda to support 100 per cent production of treated water in Sungai Dua LRA.

"Last March, PBAPP abstracted an average of 1,254 million litres per day (MLD) of water from Sungai Muda to produce 1,028 MLD from LRA Sungai Dua and PBAPP will release water from EMD only when it cannot abstract 1,254 MLD of water from Sungai Muda.

"Therefore, EMD acts as a 'backup' source of raw water to Sungai Dua LRA when the level of Sungai Muda is getting lower and PBAPP has also released water from EMD (for use in Sungai Dua LRA) during emergency scenarios such as the Sungai Muda water level incident on May 14," he said in a statement today.

He said there are two main physical limitations for the use of EMD as a backup source of raw water which is the maximum release capacity of this dam is 300 MLD which means PBAPP currently abstracts an average of 1,254 MLD of water per day from Sungai Muda to support 100 per cent production of treated water at Sungai Dua LRA.

Pathmanathan said EMD by itself could only support about 23.9 per cent of the production of fully treated water in Sungai Dua LRA and raw water from EMD could also only be channelled to Sungai Dua LRA.

He said the raw water cannot be pumped to any other LRA or dam in Penang and therefore EMD cannot function as a backup source of raw water for any other LRA or dam.

"EMD was built to support the production of treated water exclusively for only one LRA which is the Sungai Dua LRA because it produces more than 80 per cent of the treated water supplied by PBAPP in the Seberang Perai area and the South West district every day, the Sungai Dua LRA service area covers approximately 453,954 residential and business premises," he said.

He said the total number of consumers in Penang last year was 676,857 users and the remaining 222,903 other water users were accommodated by the Itam Water Dam, Bukit Pancur Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam and eight other LRAs.

"In conclusion, the maximum effective capacity of EMD is 86,400 MLD but PBAPP can only release 300 MLD until the Federal Government completes the Mengkuang Dam Expansion Project (MDEP) to increase the release capacity to 1,000 MLD," he said.

According to him, the MDEP was started in 2011 but was still incomplete until this year and due to the high demand for water this year, water supply for all users in Penang can only be maintained at 100 per cent 24 hours a week, if all four dams including EMD and nine LRA works optimally.

He said PBAPP is working hard to ensure that the shrinking reserves of Itam Water Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam do not dry up until the rains arrive this September, but they need all users to reduce their water consumption immediately.