

February 8, 2024

PBAPP seeks SPAN's help for cloud seeding



GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has officially written to the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) to seek urgent assistance for cloud seeding operations to be carried out in the water catchment areas of the Air Itam Dam and Air Itam Water Treatment Plant (WTP).

In a letter dated Feb 2, PBAPP had asked SPAN chief executive officer Datuk Ahmad Faizal Abdul Rahman for help in planning and implementing cloud seeding operations in March (an inter-monsoon season) to support its efforts to increase the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam.

The effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam was at 32.8 per cent at noon today.

PBAPP chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said they told SPAN that the cloud seeding operations were critical for PBAPP to sustain continuous water supply services in Air Itam, for the benefit of about 30,000 water consumers, including domestic and non-domestic consumers.

"We have also informed SPAN that cloud seeding operations in May and June last year had contributed to a total of 30.5mm of rainfall in the catchment areas of the Air Itam Dam and Air Itam WTP.

"The rainfall helped to ensure that there was no water crisis in Air Itam in 2023.

"PBAPP is awaiting feedback from SPAN to start preliminary discussions regarding the proposed cloud seeding operations," he said today. Pathmanathan said as announced last Friday, PBAPP would seek approval from the Penang government this week to implement its Air Itam Dam Action Plan 2024 (AIDAP 2024).

He said under the AIDAP 2024, PBAPP was targeting to increase the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam gradually by:

- * drawing less water from the dam than the average inflow of raw water into the dam daily. The average inflow into the dam is 15 million litres per day (MLD). PBAPP will only draw down 11 MLD to channel to the Air Itam WTP;

- * sustaining an inflow of 6 MLD from the Main Intake and Tat's Intake to the Air Itam WTP; and

- * pumping 33 MLD of treated water into the service area of the Air Itam WTP from the Padang Brown Pumping Station. The point of origin of the treated water will be the Sungai Dua WTP in Seberang Prai.

He said the success of the AIDAP 2024 was dependent on:

- * a daily inflow of 15 MLD of raw water into the Air Itam Dam from the Balik Pulau Intake, Side Stream Intake and Sungai Pinang West Intake; and

- * a daily inflow of 6 MLD of raw water to the Air Itam WTP from the Main's Intake and Tat's Intake.

"As such, we are seeking the federal government's assistance for cloud seeding operations to induce as much rainfall as possible in the water catchment areas for the five intakes involved.

"PBAPP is also planning to seek endorsement from the Penang government this week to initiate the AIDAP 2024," he added.

Last Friday, PBAPP said it was finalising the AIDAP 2024 proposal to the state government that might potentially increase the effective capacity of the dam from 34.6 per cent last Friday to 50 per cent by the end of April. This followed the dwindling of the Air Itam Dam water level.