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Penang's new domestic water rate is fair - PWSC

BERNAMA



GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PWSC) has clarified that the new domestic water rate in the state is fair and reasonable, even after the recent tariff increase.

PWSC chief executive officer, K. Pathmanathan, stated that the last rate adjustment was in 2015, thus the new rate of 0.86 sen per cubic metre (m³) for up to 35 m³ of monthly usage is justified.

Moreover, the costs associated with producing and supplying treated water in Penang have risen by 30% from 2015 to 2023, he said.

“PWSC’s electricity expenditure for pumping water across the state has significantly increased. Since the introduction of Tenaga Nasional Berhad’s (TNB) Imbalance Cost Past-Through in 2023, our electricity bill has gone up by 22.3%.

“Moreover, between 2015 and 2023, PWSC provided RM834.74 million in water subsidies for domestic usage in Penang, a figure that is no longer sustainable,” he emphasised in a statement today.

Pathmanathan noted that 77.3 percent of the 593,255 domestic users in Penang use 35 m³ or less of water per month.

“The cost of producing and supplying 1 m³ of treated water exceeds the average domestic rate of 0.86 sen per m³ for usage up to 35 m³ per month. Thus, in 2024, PWSC continues to subsidise domestic water usage to benefit the majority of people at a lower, acceptable level,” he explained.

He noted that the Federal government has regulated the new water rates for 11 states in Peninsular Malaysia and three Federal Territories: Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, and Putrajaya since January 30.

Pathmanathan mentioned, however, that the average domestic water bill in Penang remains lower than electricity, fuel, internet, and mobile phone bills.

Yesterday, Penang Gerakan Party chairman Oh Tong Keong called on Pakatan Harapan (PH) representatives to raise the issue of the new water tariff rate with the state government in the upcoming State Legislative Assembly sitting.

This follows claims that the new rate not only burdens the people but also affects the state’s economic development.