3-5–2025

New raw water management board with ‘bite’ for Penang

Chief minister Chow Kon Yeow says the proposed body will have enforcement powers, including the authority to issue permits and licences, and prosecute.

GEORGE TOWN:

The Penang government will table a water-related bill to strengthen the management of its raw water resources, says chief minister Chow Kon Yeow.

He said the bill, which will be tabled at the state assembly meeting later this month, will pave the way for the establishment of a dedicated raw water management board with enforcement powers.

The board will also have the authority to issue permits and licences, approve extractions, and prosecute violations, among others.

“Currently, we have the water regulatory board parked under the state secretary’s office which is responsible for raw water issues.

“The time has come for Penang to enact a law and set up a raw water management board that functions to serve as the main authority on raw water source issues,” he told reporters after officiating the state-level World Water Day event at the Air Itam dam today.

Chow said that with better oversight, the state hopes to cut the average daily water consumption from 308 litres per person to the national benchmark of 250 litres.

“Even in Singapore, they use 150 litres. That means we are using twice as much water compared with Singapore,” he said.

Chow said other states already have water management boards in place, so Penang is catching up with proper legal backing.

For example, Luas, or the Selangor Water Management Authority, was established following a Cabinet directive in 1997 and formalised by the Selangor Water Management Board Enactment 1999.