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Penang flats set to get RM4 million boost to improve water facilities



GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has contributed RM4 million to the Penang State Housing Board (LPNPP) under its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme to upgrade water supply facilities at low-cost apartments across the state.

The contribution, which includes allocations of RM2 million each for 2024 and 2025, will fund projects under the Prihatin Programme – the Infrastructure Maintenance Intervention Programme.

The initiative is a collaborative effort involving LPNPP, the Penang Island City Council (MBPP), the Seberang Perai City Council (MBSP) and PBAPP, aimed at improving the quality and reliability of water supply services in targeted areas.

Prihatin covers a range of works, including repairs to existing water tanks and pipelines, as well as the construction of new suction tanks and pump houses, subject to technical inspections and approvals from local authorities.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said an estimated 300 low-cost housing projects in Penang, mainly five-storey apartment blocks built more than 15 years ago, were constructed without suction tanks and water pumping systems.

"At that time, Penang's water consumption was below 800 million litres per day (MLD). However, with current consumption reaching 870 MLD, the treated water pressure of 10 metre head (mH) is no longer sufficient to channel water directly to rooftop tanks, which are typically 20 metres or higher above ground.

"This has led to recurring supply disruptions, particularly in apartments located on higher ground or at the end of distribution lines, exacerbated by leaking or malfunctioning rooftop tanks that fail to fill completely during low-demand periods," he said at a press conference at his office in Komtar today.

Chow, who is also PBAPP chairman, said the initiative was crucial in supporting the B40 income group, who make up the majority of residents in low-cost apartments, many of which lack functioning management corporations to maintain building facilities.

Under the Prihatin Programme, about 20 low-cost housing schemes will benefit in stages, with five projects approved under the first phase. Site assessments by local authorities are currently under way.

Meanwhile, PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Ir. K. Pathmanathan said the programme was designed to assist communities in need, noting that many low-cost apartments had no proper management bodies to ensure regular maintenance.

"With ongoing efforts to upgrade Penang's water infrastructure to meet increasing demand, the Prihatin Programme represents a vital step towards supporting vulnerable communities and enhancing public utilities across the state," he added.