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Penang pushes active water-saving culture, aims to cut domestic use to 250 litres per person daily



GEORGE TOWN, May 16 — Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang (PBAPP) aims to reduce the state's domestic water consumption to 250 litres per capita per day (LPCD) this year through various water-saving initiatives involving multiple stakeholders.

Its chief executive officer, Datuk K. Pathmanathan, said the target is achievable if domestic users consistently practise water conservation, as even small savings at the household level can have a significant impact on overall water usage in the state.

He said the LPCD rate in Penang has shown a notable decline in recent years due to strategic collaboration between PBAPP, Water Watch Penang (WWP) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

"In 2022, Penang's LPCD rate stood at 307 litres per day, while in the following year it rose slightly to 308 litres per day. However, last year saw a sharp decline to 261 litres per day, which is a significant achievement resulting from joint efforts by various parties, including WWP and USM.

"PBAPP is now focusing on achieving the target of 250 litres per day, given that the national average currently stands at around 225 litres per day. There is still considerable room for us to reach the target, and it is not overly difficult — even small savings by domestic users can help reduce overall water consumption," he told reporters here today.

He was met after the state-level World Water Day celebration at the USM Parade Ground, which was officiated by Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and attended by WWP president Chan Ngai Weng.

K. Pathmanathan said the corporation is urging domestic consumers in the state to adopt an 'active water-saving' culture to help ensure sufficient water supply amid the challenges of climate change and increasing pressure on water resources.

He said reducing domestic water consumption is as important as efforts to increase water supply capacity through major projects being implemented by the federal government, the state government and PBAPP. "Last year, Penang's average water consumption was recorded at 865 million litres per day (MLD), with 482 MLD or 55.7 per cent used by households, while the remaining 383 MLD was consumed by non-domestic sectors such as factories, hotels, shopping malls, business premises and government offices.

"The limited land area of Penang, at just 1,158 square kilometres, also contributes to the state's constrained raw water resources," he said.

Meanwhile, Chow said that if the 250 LPCD target is achieved in Penang, it could directly extend the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam by 37.3 per cent during hot and dry periods.

He said the extended reserve capacity of the dams could be the deciding factor between a 'water crisis' and 'no water crisis' during hot and dry El Nino years.

"Individually, the contribution required from each of us is merely a small saving of about 17 litres per day. However, when this small practice is adopted collectively by Penang's 1.8 million residents, it would generate a significant cumulative impact, amounting to savings of up to 30.6 million litres per day (MLD). "From a reservoir data analysis perspective, the collective savings of 30.6 MLD could directly reduce daily reliance on the Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam by 37.3 per cent," he said. — Bernama