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PRESS STATEMENT

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PENANG IS WORKING TOWARDS ACHIEVING WATER SUPPLY SECURITY UNTIL YEAR 2050

- **Penang has achieved a treated water reserve margin 32.9% in 2018, the highest and safest in Malaysia.**
- **The “Masterplan Study for Potable Water Supply in Penang until Year 2050” recommends the implementation of the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS) for raw water security.**

PENANG, Monday, 1.4.2019: Penang is working towards water supply security until Year 2050, in accordance to the recommendations of a masterplan study.

In the period 2008 - 2018, Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) invested RM682.6 million into water supply engineering projects in Penang.

As a result, Penang has a treated water reserve margin of 32.9%. This is the highest and safest margin in Malaysia. The national average margin was 14.3% in 2017, according to the Malaysia Water Industry Guide 2018 (MWIG 2018).

On 14.1.2019, PBAPP issued a media release stating that it is planning to invest a total of RM501 million in water supply projects in the period 2019 – 2021, for the benefit of Penang. This media release generated widespread reports in various print and online media.

WRONG AND MISLEADING ALLEGATIONS

On 26.3.2019, www.aliran.com published a story entitled “Penang needs PWMP more than PTMP”. This story alleged the following:

- There is no “Penang Water Master Plan”.



- Penang has no comprehensive long-term plan to manage its water supply and promote water security.
- Penang did not follow-up on its campaign to save Ulu Muda, the water catchment area for Sungai Muda.
- Water security is downplayed in Penang.

These 4 allegations are wrong and misleading.

“MASTERPLAN STUDY FOR POTABLE WATER IN PENANG UNTIL YEAR 2050”

In 2009, PBAPP commissioned an independent “Masterplan Study for Potable Water Supply in Penang until Year 2050”. This study projected Penang’s treated water demand to be 1,483 million litres per day (MLD) by 2030; 1,696 MLD by 2040 and 1,884 MLD by 2050.

The study noted that about 80% of Penang’s raw water was derived from Sungai Muda, and there was a need to reduce such heavy dependence from a single source.

Accordingly, the study proposed the implementation of the **Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS)**, to tap a second major raw water resource for Penang.

Since 2011, the Penang State Government and PBAPP has been pursuing the implementation of the SPRWTS, not only for the benefit of Penang, but for the benefit of North Perak as well.

However, the previous Federal Government failed to implement the SPRWTS in the period 2012 – 2018.

After the change of Federal Government in 2018, the Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources (KATS) called for Perak and Penang to seek a “win-win” solution on tapping Sungai Perak as a raw water resource.

In 2019, KATS has taken the lead in hosting talks between Perak and Penang in Putrajaya. KATS is now commissioning technical studies to determine the best way to implement this inter-state water transfer scheme.



Kindly note the following:

- For Penang, the potential maximum raw water yield from SPRWTS is 1,000 MLD.
- In 2018, PBAPP produced 1,073 MLD of treated water per day by abstracting raw water from Sungai Muda and other raw water resources in Penang.
- The projected water demand for Penang in 2050 is 1,884 MLD.

As such, due to its promising potential yield, the SPRWTS may ensure water supply security for Penang until Year 2050.

So, there is a water supply masterplan for Penang. It is called the “Masterplan Study for Potable Water Supply in Penang until Year 2050”.

The masterplan study’s findings, data and recommendations have been publicly quoted by the Penang State Government and PBAPP since 2009.

Meanwhile, the SPRWTS reflects Penang and PBAPP’s commitment to pursue *a comprehensive long-term plan to promote water security for Penang*, with assistance from the new Federal Government.

CONSERVING AND PROTECTING ULU MUDA

On 4.9.2018 and 5.9.2018, Malaysian online and print media quoted KATS Minister YB Dr. Xavier Jayakumar as saying that the Kedah State Government had finally agreed to **ban logging in Ulu Muda**.

Ulu Muda refers to the 163,103-hectare Greater Ulu Muda rainforest area in Kedah. It is the water catchment area for Sungai Muda, which presently serves as Penang’s one and only primary raw water resource.

On 6.9.2018, PBAPP issued a media release to thank KATS and Kedah for the ban on logging.

On 23.10.2018, PBAPP issued another media release, proposing the following measures to protect Ulu Muda legally and sustainably:



- a. Introduce a Federal law that will legally protect Ulu Muda as a “Northern Region Water Catchment Area” in perpetuity;
- b. Establish a Federal department to monitor and manage Ulu Muda, not only as a rainforest area, but as a regional water catchment area; and
- c. Provide Federal compensation to Kedah to conserve Ulu Muda, not only for Kedah, but for Perlis and Penang as well.

These proposals have also been tabled in meetings and communiques with KATS and the National Water Resources Council (MSAN).

So, it is untrue that “nothing was said about Ulu Muda” after Penang’s World Water Day 2018 commemoration on 23.6.2018.

In fact, after Penang and PBAPP had highlighted the importance of Ulu Muda as a regional raw water resource, logging was banned in its precious rainforests.

Penang and PBAPP would like Ulu Muda to be properly conserved and protected for perpetuity. However, since Ulu Muda is in Kedah, the onus is on the Federal Government to work with Kedah to carry out the necessary actions.

TRANSPARENCY ON WATER SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Penang is possibly the most transparent state in Malaysia when it comes to water supply management. PBAPP has been prominently publicising its 5 key challenges in water supply management:

1. Climate change
2. Logging in Ulu Muda
3. High dependency on only one raw water resource (Sungai Muda)
4. High per capita domestic consumption
5. The State Government’s “No Water Rationing” policy



PBAPP has also been implementing the following 5 strategies to address the challenges:

- DEMAND MANAGEMENT

1. Public education and awareness to alert the public on water supply issues and cultivate a water saving culture.
2. Raising the value of water to reduce Penang's per capita domestic consumption (the highest in Malaysia), as well as to raise sufficient funding for water supply projects for the future.

Incidentally, Penang's per capita domestic consumption was 278 litres/capita/day (l/c/d) in 2018 as compared to the national average of 201 l/c/d, whereas the national target is to bring it down to 180 l/c/d.

3. Promoting the mandatory installation of water saving devices in all new buildings in Penang to enable automatically controlled water conservation.

- SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

4. Adopting holistic water supply management practices including demand management, protecting water catchments, managing non-revenue water (NRW) and upgrading water supply infrastructure to mitigate the higher risks of water crises due to climate change.
5. Tapping additional raw water resources for Penang, including Sungai Perak (surface water), rainwater harvesting, water recycling and desalination.

In the period 2016 – 2018, PBAPP issued 63 mass media releases on key water supply issues and developments in Penang and the Northern region, including 15 releases referring specifically to Ulu Muda and Sungai Muda.

PBAPP has also been actively posting water supply news on social media via Facebook. Media releases, news reports and the effective capacities of Penang's dams are also updated regularly on www.pba.com.my for public reference.



PBAPP personnel have been presenting papers on sustainable water supply management in Penang during conferences and forums, for the benefit of water organisations, government bodies, NGOs, colleges and trade organisations in Penang, throughout Malaysia and overseas.

By sharing information, PBAPP seeks to promote the development of a water-conscious society in Penang and highlight Penang's needs to the Federal Government.

A water-conscious society is more prone to become a water saving community which uses water wisely in a water-stressed state.

By keeping the people and the Federal Government aware of water supply developments in Penang, PBAPP is seeking support and help to achieve water security for the state until Year 2050.

As such, it is untrue that water security is being downplayed in Penang.

On the contrary, it is being prioritised as a critical requirement for the "Penang 2030" vision, to become a "family-focused green and smart state that inspires the nation."

Thank You.

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