Too much demand
Mohd Zin: Water supply not enough to cope with situation

By TIO XIN YI
thexiny@thestar.com.my

Selangor Barisan Nasional coordinator Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Mohamed has warned that the water supply in Selangor cannot cope with the demand. He said requests for water supply from developers have been put on hold by Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas) since January due to expected shortage of water supply.

"It involved 134 applications for a total request capacity of 141 million litres per day, as of April. The affected districts included Klang, Petaling, Sepang, Kuala Langat, Kuala Lumpur, Hulu Langat and Gombak," he said.

The low reserve capacity will cause Syabas to take a longer time to recover from water supply interruptions.

-Mohd Zin explained that the recorded water demand growth from 2005 to 2010 was 3.2% a year, and that the demand was expected to increase by 3.5% a year for 2013 to 2016.

"By comparing the production and distribution capacities of all 33 water treatment plants in the state, we have a reserve capacity of only 2.4%, which is 106.8 million liter per day.

"This amount is very little, because on certain days, the water usage in Klang Valley is 7% higher than the average demand capacity.

"The low reserve capacity will cause Syabas to take a longer time to recover from water supply interruptions," he said.

Mohd Zin added that Selangor state government's refusal to give the green light to the Langat 2 water treatment plant would worsen the water supply situation in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

The project to treat water from Pahang was supposed to be built two years ago via a 44.8km-long pipeline costing RM3.94bil.

The project was stalled because Selangor and the Federal governments were unable to reach an agreement.

"We cannot afford to face a water supply crisis because it will give the country a negative image. The Pahang-Selangor inter-state raw water transfer was scheduled to be ready by 2014.

"Even if the project is allowed to proceed now, it would only be ready in 2016," Mohd Zin said.

He also added that the state government has frozen water concessions' capital expenditure, and hence the concessionaires were unable to continue to replace old and broken pipes.

"This contributes to high non-revenue water (water that is lost before reaching customers)" he said.

Mohd Zin also lashed out at the government for failing to implement the free water policy comprehensively.

"Many poor people have to pay a higher price for water because they are using bulk meters," he said.

Meanwhile, Puncak Naga executive chairman Tan Sri Rozali Ismail was quoted as saying that while most of the water treatment plants exceeded their operational capacities, there were some that were not operating at full capacity either.

He said even though the production of these water treatment plants could be increased, it would not help with the water supply in other areas with water stress.

"This is because there are no pipes to channel the water to the said areas," he said.

He added that the pipe network should be upgraded.

"However, the relevant authority has to give the approval, especially when the capital expenditure is still frozen," he said.

Rozali said for instance, the Sungai Langat water treatment plant was designed to produce 380 million litres per day but has been producing 447.42 million litres per day, 15.9% extra from its capacity. So was the Sungai Sepenyah plant that exceeded its capacity by 22%.

-Mohd Zin