More costly phase 2

Initial estimates tag this stop-gap water supply move at RM331mil

BY YAP LENG KUEN

PTIHASHA: The second phase of the Government's stop-gap measure to plug the projected shortfall in Selangor's water supply is likely to cost much more than the first phase.

This is in view of the expected increased demand for water until 2017, the need for a higher reserve margin for water, and the higher cost involved in bringing in water from Rasa, Selangor.

The first phase, which is already in progress, costs RM273mil and will add 215 million litres per day (MLD) to meet demand until 2014, when Selangor is expected to face a water supply shortage. Phase Two will increase capacity by 481 MLD, which will meet demand until 2017.

The cost for the second phase, which was recently approved, is not finalised yet as design works are still underway. Initial estimates tag this second phase at RM331mil.

Besides the five projects currently listed under the second phase, an additional job which will require the approval of Selangor, is being considered – the upgrading of the Sungai Langat water treatment plant.

"It will be more costly than the first phase," Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Peter Chin told StarBiz. "We are bringing in water from Rasa in Selangor when we could have obtained it easily from Pahang under the interstate raw water transfer programme and Langat 2 water treatment plant project."

The failure to implement the Langat 2 treatment plant, which has been delayed by 15 months, has been attributed to the refusal of the Selangor government to approve the development order and other approvals necessary for the implemenation of the project. "As a result, we will be facing an acute water shortage if the Federal Government does not take any action now," said Chin.

To overcome this water shortage problem, two phases of a water mitigation programme have been approved by the Federal Government. The first phase was approved under the 10th Malaysia Plan in June last year.

"We have to prepare ourselves beyond 2014; even if Selangor gives us approval for Langat 2 tomorrow, we will need five years to complete the project. It is not just the treatment plant but works such as on the reticulation pipes and others which are away from the plant site.

"We need the lead time of five years; we must look into the sufficiency of treated water up to the year 2017. That is what Mitigation 2 will give us.

"We are not talking of a luxurious capacity but a reserve margin of 5% of water between demand and production of water, which is very thin. What we are doing with Mitigation 1 and 2 is to prepare ourselves for 2017," said Chin.

Apart from the two mitigation programmes, the Federal Government has also built the Sungai Labas water treatment plant as an alternative supply to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport. It was completed in December last year with a capacity of 105 MLD.

"These programmes and projects serve as an interim solution to meet the increasing water demand while waiting for the completion of the Pahang-Selangor interstate raw water transfer and Langat 2 water treatment plant projects," said Chin.

He added that the costs were rising as a result of the Selangor government's refusal to allow the projects to go ahead without completing the restructuring of the state's water industry.

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