



Manage raw water resources on a regional basis, says Chow

[Melissa Darlyne Chow](#) | June 28, 2018

The Penang CM says with a growing population and increasing diversification in socioeconomic activities, regional raw water demand will continue to increase.



Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow.

GEORGE TOWN: Penang has called for the implementation of regional raw water resource management programmes to ensure long-term water supply for all northern states.

Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said the total population of Perlis, Perak, Penang and Kedah was about 6.69 million, adding that a growing population and increasing diversification in socioeconomic activities meant regional raw water demand would continue to increase.

In Penang, he said, water demand had increased by about 11% in the past 10 years, from an average of 744 million litres per day (MLD) in 2008 to 826 MLD last year.

“As such, a regional raw water management programme must be drafted and implemented to better protect and manage important raw water resources, such as the 163,103 hectare Greater Ulu Muda Forest Reserve in Kedah, that serves as the primary water catchment area for Perlis, Kedah and Penang.

“Secondly, there should also be a plan for the Sungai Muda Water System with eight irrigation intakes and 15 water supply intakes in Kedah and Penang.

“Lastly, we should also look into Sungai Perak, a relatively under-optimised raw water resource that may be tapped to meet the water supply needs of northern Perak and Penang until 2050,” he said in a press conference after attending the PBA Holdings Bhd (PBAHB) annual general meeting here today.

Also present was Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) CEO Jaseni Maidinsa. Chow said the Penang government and PBAPP hoped to work with the new federal government and other northern states to implement such programmes.

Chow, who is now serving as the non-independent and non-executive chairman of PBAPP and PBAHB, said PBAPP had worked together with the state government to highlight the importance of banning all logging activities in Ulu Muda and gazetting Ulu Muda as a regional water catchment area for Perlis, Kedah and Penang. It also sought to better coordinate raw water releases from the Muda and Beris Dams’ Sungai Muda Water System for the benefit of Kedah and Penang, especially during dry seasons.

The state has also been highlighting the importance of implementing the proposed Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS) for the benefit of northern Perak and Penang.

“PBAPP has also proposed the drafting of a northern region raw water crisis plan to minimise the risks of a regional water crisis during prolonged dry spells caused by climate change, as the 2016 Super El Nino phenomenon.

“In the past, PBAPP and the Penang government raised these concerns and issues to various federal authorities, including the National Water Resources Council (MSAN), the energy, green technology and water ministry (KeTTHA), the natural resources and environment ministry, and the National Water Services Commission,” he said, adding that the previous administration had not taken any action to address the issues and concerns. Chow said both PBAPP and the state government would resubmit the proposals related to Ulu Muda, Sungai Muda and SPRWTS once the new ministers to head the KeTTHA and NRE portfolios are appointed.

“PBAPP also hopes to be able to present its proposals to the new MSAN, which will be chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

“At the same time, we will support new raw water talks between the new Penang and Kedah governments on Ulu Muda and Sungai Muda; and with the new Perak government regarding SPRWTS,” he added.