

Food for Thought

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Auditor General's 2012 Report: Comments On Water and Energy Issues by AWER

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LETTER TO EDITOR: Auditor General's 2012 Report: Comments On Water and Energy Issues by AWER

04th October 2013 (Friday)

Stop Redundancy of Government Agency

The Auditor General's report touched on some of the failures by Sewerage Services Department (JPP) of Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA). Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (AWER) have raised the issue of redundant agencies in government operation many times and JPP is one of the agency. Having such agency will deter actual plans laid out in the national water services industry restructuring process via the Water Services Industry Act 2006 (WSIA).

AWER has also met up with the Secretary General of KeTTHA to discuss on dissolving JPP and absorbing the officers into KeTTHA, Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara (SPAN), Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd (IWK), Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd (PAAB) or other government agencies. This discussion notes was also resubmitted to the attention of current KeTTHA Minister after emails and letters went missing in the minister's office during the first few attempts.

Similarly, Water Supply Department (JBA) needs to undergo similar operation of dissolution. Redundancy is not only a stumbling block but it also causes operational mismanagement. For example, the incident of pipe burst of newly laid pipe in Jalan Universiti caused severe road damage that left 3 vehicles damaged and one motorist went up air around 10 meter in late April 2010. The reasons given for the incident by JBA only shows failure to carry out duties properly. There were no follow up investigations done and reports being published. At the moment, JBA's duties can be easily done by SPAN, PAAB and other water companies. In addition to that, Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA)

that is tainted with Feed-in-Tariff (FiT) and its formation issues is also redundant with the functions of Energy Commission (ST). Why KeTTHA always operates in such redundant manner?

Few days ago, Deputy Prime Minister urged the government officers to prevent turf fight and affect the overall performance of the government operation. In addition to that, government should lead by example in reducing redundancy in government operation as subsidy rationalisation measures are being implemented. The steps to reduce redundancy of agencies will be able to reduce governments' operational budget burden especially in KeTTHA. These changes (to dissolve JBA, JPP and SEDA) can be recommended by YAB Prime Minister in the coming Budget 2014 as an immediate operational budget optimisation step in view of subsidy rationalisation and government's effort in reducing administration cost.

Audit Past 10 Years Rural Water and Electricity Supply Projects

Recently, AWER visited a community in Kampung Panggau Dau, Sarawak. This community is supplied with electricity since 1970s. But, they have yet to receive treated water supply. They still depend on springs for their water supply. How many more fellow Malaysians are still waiting for it in rural areas in Malaysia? Billions of Ringgits are allocated but does it really reach the rural community?

We would strongly recommend the Auditor General to conduct a full audit for Rural Water and Electricity supply projects that have been implemented in Sabah, Sarawak and rural areas of Peninsular Malaysia. With only 6 years to go to achieve vision 2020, basic services such as treated water and electricity should not be neglected.

In addition to that, AWER encourages both Sabah and Sarawak to join the WSIA regime to improve the water services industry in both states. We hope both the states complete this process by year 2015. Giving rainwater harvesting systems alone is not a long term solution to rural water supply. Furthermore, the economy development in both states will also be jeopardised without reliable treated water supply.

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President

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