

A Call to Stop All-on-going Work on the Kelau Dam and Pahang-Selangor Interstate Raw Water Transfer Project

The Coalition For Sustainable Water Management consisting of Treat Every Environment Special S/B (TrEES), Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM), Save Our Sungai Selangor (SOS Selangor), Centre for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), and Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) calls upon the Federal government, Selangor and Pahang state governments to **stop all on-going work** (design and award of tenders for construction) on the Pahang-Selangor Raw Water Transfer Project, pending a complete review of the basis for the water transfer projects as given in the National Water Resources Study (NWRS) report.

The Pahang-Selangor Raw Water Transfer Project, was a proposal arising from the National Water Resources Study commissioned by the EPU in 2000. **It is the view of the Coalition, that the NWRS has a number of grievous flaws, raising doubts on the viability of the NWRS as a justifying document for the Pahang-Selangor Raw Water Transfer project and all other water supply projects that may arise from the recommendations made in the NWRS.**

A thorough review of the projected water demands and population growth figures in the NWRS report should be conducted in view of the enormous financial costs required to implement the water transfer project and the substantial environmental impacts arising from its implementation. This review should be conducted for the following reasons:

- (a) Use of questionable per capita water demand figures in the NWRS report
- (b) Changes in Development Plans for Peninsular Malaysia since 2000
- (c) Need for the proposed projects to adapt to “Climate Change Scenarios”

In addition, there are no plans or strategies in the NWRS Report to manage per capita water demand at a sustainable level. Instead, the report assumes that per capita water demand will continue to increase unabated into the future.

The “*Design Guidelines for Water Supply Systems*” published by the Malaysian Water Association (MWA) in 1994 is the recommended method for estimating water demands in the country since it is an adaptation of the JKR Design Criteria and Standards for Water Supply Systems published in 1989. **The NWRS completely ignores the use of the recommended method, and instead uses a method that excessively inflates the per capita water consumption figures.**

The figure of 320 litres/per capita/day (l/c/d) stated in the MWA Design Guidelines is within the per capita water consumption range reported for major cities of other countries, such as 156 l/c/d for London (UK), 214 l/c/d for Sydney (Australia) and 328 l/c/d for Singapore. This figure of 320l/c/d accounts for all normal commercial, industrial and domestic use, including a 25% loss due to unaccounted-for-water losses.

In comparison the water demand figures used in the NWRS Report of **400-657 l/c/d** for the capital region of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor in 1995 with projected, progressive increase of up to **500-1224 l/c/d in 2010**, and up to **729-1077 l/c/d in 2050** appear **highly excessive and are thus, very questionable.**

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This large increase in the total per capita water demand projection in the NWRS for all the stated years arise principally from projected industrial uses.

An estimate of the per capita industrial water demand in Selangor, based on the method used in the MWA Design Guidelines, and the projected industrial and population figures given in the Rancangan Struktur Negeri Selangor 2020 (RSNS-2020), was carried out by the Coalition.

It was found that the per capita industrial water demand ranges from 13.66 l/c/d in 2010 to 27.39 l/c/d in 2020 assuming that the projected industrial land in Selangor for 2010 and 2020 are completely utilised for heavy industries, respectively.

The Table below shows the comparison of figures for the industrial water demands for 2010 and 2020 for Selangor, derived using the NWRS and MWA method.

Comparison of the Estimated Industrial Water Demands for 2010 and 2020 for Selangor, reported in the NWRS and estimated using the recommended MWA Method

Year	2010	2020
NWRS Method (l/c/d)	75-659	139-611
MWA Method (l/c/d)	13.66	27.39

Note: The values in the NWRS Method refers to a range of values for different districts in Selangor

It can be seen that the appreciably lower figures derived using the MWA method seem more reasonable compared with the extremely high values given in the NWRS Report for the year 2020

The procedure adopted by the NWRS to estimate the industrial water demand for 2000 to 2050, requires six steps. A series of highly questionable and unsupported assumptions need to be made at every step to link the national GDP to per capita income, to manufacturing growth, and ultimately to the industrial water demand.

This may explain why, at the end of the six-step procedure, the estimated industrial water demand figures of the NWRS become grossly excessive, as compared with those estimated using the recommended MWA method and projected industrial land requirements in Selangor, as reported in the RSNS-2020.

To summarise, the Pahang-Selangor Raw Water Transfer project is based on figures where the margin of error is more than 100%.

In view of the questions raised on the accuracy of the water demand figures in the NWRS used to justify the Pahang-Selangor Raw Water Transfer Project, the Coalition calls upon the Malaysian Government to take **immediate action** to do the following:

- (a) **Stop all on-going work** (design and award of tenders for construction) on the Pahang-Selangor Raw Water Transfer Project, pending the complete review of the basis for the water transfer projects as given in the NWRS report.
- (b) Conduct a complete review of the NWRS report and update it with the latest information to account for the issues raised above, and include strategies and plans to manage the per capita water demand to remain at a sustainable level.
- (c) Commission an immediate study to review the need for the water transfer projects based on the updated NWRS report

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We urge the Malaysian Government to take immediate action and review the need for a project that requires an enormous financial cost to implement and has substantial, long-term and permanent environmental impacts. The RM9 billion estimated cost of the project, would be better spent on projects that are clearly and urgently needed now in the country, such as an improved integrated public transport system, hospitals and schools, rather than a project that may not be needed because its justification is based on highly questionable and excessive per capita water demand figures.

Endorsed by:

The Coalition for Sustainable Water Management (CSWM)

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