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AMAR SHAH MOHSEN AND ASHWIN KUMAR AT DEWAN RAKYAT

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# Water tariff hike next year

Deputy minister says bills will not rise drastically

**KUALA LUMPUR:** All states are expected to raise water tariffs next year to ensure consumers enjoy higher quality water, the Dewan Rakyat was told yesterday.

Deputy Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Tengku Zulpuri Shah Raja Puji said the current average tariff of RM1.38 per 1,000 litres of water is considerably lower than the production cost of RM2.31 per 1,000 litres, which is increasing annually.

He said this had weakened water supply service providers' financials.

It would be difficult for the providers to offer better services to consumers without higher tariffs, he said.

He was responding to a question from Datuk Mansor Othman (PH-Nibong Tebal) who wanted to know how the government would ensure that the higher tariffs would not burden the *rakyat* when implemented next year.

The deputy minister said the price increase would not be drastic, possibly between 6 sen and 71 sen per 1,000 litres, taking into account the financial capability of the lower income households.

To address the burden on this target group,

the government would enforce a minimum increment for households that consume under 20 cubic meters of water per month, which represents 47.8% of domestic consumers in Malaysia.

"This increase is still considerably lower when compared with other utility tariffs such as electricity, gas and telecommunications," Tengku Zulpuri said.

He said the ministry had consulted with various stakeholders, including water services providers, state governments and consumer associations, before deciding on the new rates for the respective states.

This will ensure a win-win situation for all quarters, he said.