

Headline	Sabah Umno urges higher exemption to ease people`s burden		
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# Sabah Umno urges higher exemption to ease people's burden

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**KOTA KINABALU:** The threshold for the Sales and Service Tax (SST) on electricity bills should be raised to RM300 instead of RM203 in Sabah so that more people can benefit from the exemption, says Umno.

Sabah Umno election director Jeffrey Nor Mohamed said the Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB) should know that consumers in the state have to contend with unstable supply, even as they pay SST.

"For now, the supply of electricity has not achieved a satisfactory level. Many users in Sabah are from the B40 group and use one main meter for several families in a house," he said in a statement yesterday.

He said this was among some reasons why the bills were higher

although many were from B40 families.

Jeffrey said that if SESB insists on imposing the 8% SST on customers with a monthly bill of RM203 and above, many would not be able to pay their bills on time. This would result in an increased number of disconnections, while adding that when this happens, SESB would have to fork out its own funds to cover the unpaid bills and SST, said Jeffrey, who felt that the 8% SST is fair on those who can afford it.

He also suggested that Malaysians who can afford to apply for an electricity meter should be allowed to use the pre-paid electricity system.

"The current prepaid system is only for selected squatter areas, but the Energy Commission of Sabah should conduct another study on this," he said, adding that this will ensure that even the

needy would still be able to enjoy basic necessities.

Meanwhile, SESB issued a statement saying that it is ready to tackle the low power reserve margin problem in the state.

SESB chief executive officer Mohd Yaakob Jaafar said the 12% reserve margin is putting the power stability and supply at risk, but measures have to be taken to maximise the (installed) reserve margin up to 80MW to face any possibilities.

"We will also conduct demand side management during peak hours, whereby large power consumers will assist by using their own generators in order to allow the state power grid to provide an additional 30MW of power to users," he said, adding that SESB is confident this measure could help reduce the pressure on the grid and prevent energy rationing.