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Application process for ToU scheme should be simplified

The Star, Malaysia



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I REFER to Tenaga Nasional Berhad's letter titled "Help at hand for consumers to control electricity usage" (*The Star*, July 30) and wish to draw attention to fundamental flaws in the public roll-out of the Time-of-Use (ToU) electricity tariff.

The new ToU scheme, introduced on July 1, promises lower electricity bills for those who shift their energy use to off-peak hours. This is a timely and laudable initiative, but its implementation has proven cumbersome especially for existing customers who should, in theory, be the easiest to transition.

Why is it even necessary for customers with smart meters to apply for this scheme manually? Smart meters already record time-of-use data. Surely, this makes the case for automatic enrolment all the stronger. Who wouldn't welcome lower energy costs?

A blanket approval for all smart meter users would be the logical and inclusive approach. Instead, many are asked to complete a six-page application form meant for new supply applicants.

Elderly Malaysians, in particular, face an uphill battle navigating an outdated process that requires resubmitting details that TNB already has. The waste is staggering, as only one page of the form is relevant and the five are extraneous.

Worse still, applying online via the myTNB app begins only on Aug 1, a full month after the scheme's launch. This delay undermines TNB's stated goal of empowering consumers.

Beyond the inconvenience, the ToU principle, when widely adopted, could help optimise national energy infrastructure.

By encouraging off-peak usage, demand during peak hours will fall, reducing the immediate need for costly capacity expansion. This benefits both consumers and the company's bottom line.

Adding insult to injury, applicants are asked to pay RM10 for stamp duty. If raising funds for the national coffers is the goal, more creative and equitable methods should be explored without penalising Malaysians who are simply trying to manage their energy costs. I urge TNB to:

- > Introduce a dedicated, simplified form for ToU applications;
- > Automatically enrol customers who have smart meters;
- > Rethink procedural costs like the RM10 stamp duty; and
- > Prioritise an inclusive and timely roll-out.

Malaysians are ready to embrace smarter energy habits. Will TNB make it easy for us to do so?

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