

Headline	'Offer same discounted power rate or give subsidy'		
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'Offer same discounted power rate or give subsidy'

KOTA KINABALU: Sri Tanjong Assemblyman Justin Wong (pic) maintains his stand that increased power tariff will have a significant impact on the people of Sabah.



"I propose the Sabah Government control the increase in electricity tariff, now that the Energy Commission of Sabah (ECoS) has officially taken over the regulatory authority of the State's electricity supply from the Energy Commission (EC)," said Justin in a statement.

"I believe this means the Sabah Government and ECoS have the authority to decide the tariff now. I would like to see what the Sabah Government is going to do next," he said.

He suggested that the State Government offer the same special rate or discounted electricity tariff it has offered foreign investor SK Nexilis, or provide local industrial companies with a subsidy to cover the drastic increase in power tariff.

"Hajiji said 99 per cent of commercial users in Sabah and Labuan are not going to be affected by the increase in electricity tariff. However, large commercial and industrial premises in Sabah are still going to be imposed with the increase, and it will impact all Sabahans as the end users.

"The increase in the electricity tariff affecting industrial and commercial users will create a domino effect because it will affect the whole supply chain.

"When huge industrial and commercial premises such as manufacturers and factories are charged 300 per cent times higher electricity tariffs, what do you think will happen?

"It is mere logic. They will have to cover their increased operational cost to the retailers such as wholesalers and supermarkets, and then to the consumers, which are Sabahans. Goods and services prices in Sabah will skyrocket.

"It is a terrible time considering the unstable economy in Sabah plus the high unemployment rate in the State," he said.

"Worse, concessions handling water treatment plants throughout Sabah such as the Timatch Group may also be affected, which may increase the water bill charges in Sabah in the future.

"It is too drastic for Sabah - from 2.11 Sen/kWh to 7.21 Sen/kWh which is over a 300 per cent increase (from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024).

"This makes the electricity tariff for commercial properties in Sabah even higher than the tariff in West Malaysia, which is at 3.7 Sen/kWh for medium voltage users and 3.5 Sen/kWh for high voltage users.

"If the government's decision to increase the tariff was to cover the cost of the increase of independent power producers (IPP) in Sabah, then the Sabah Government should use the time and budget to focus on alternative power sources instead.

"For instance, use the allocation and time to expedite the Ulu Padas Hydroelectric Dam project," he said.