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KOTA KINABALU: Yayasan Pengguna Negara Malaysia (YPNM) Sabah has urged the State Government to consider taking full ownership and control of Sabah Electricity, saying such a move would strengthen the state's energy security, autonomy and long-term economic development.

Its chairman, David Chan, said Sabah's electricity sector should be fully managed and controlled by Sabahans to ensure that decisions affecting the industry are made in the best interests of the state and its people.

"Sabah's energy future is a critical matter involving state sovereignty, long-term economic development, energy security and the welfare of consumers," he said in a statement on Monday.

According to Chan, YPNM understands that approximately 87 per cent of Sabah Electricity shares are currently linked to Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB).

Although the utility company has undergone rebranding exercises, he said there remains a perception that management structures and major decision-making processes continue to be heavily influenced by external parties.

He said matters such as electricity tariffs, generation planning, infrastructure investment, renewable energy development and future grid expansion should be determined based on Sabah's own priorities and needs.

"The people of Sabah continue to face electricity supply challenges, including power disruptions, unstable supply in

certain districts and concerns over future tariff increases," he said.

Chan believes greater state ownership would provide Sabah with stronger authority to determine fair tariff structures, accelerate renewable energy investments and implement long-term solutions tailored to local requirements.

He noted that Sabah possesses significant renewable energy potential, including solar power, hydropower, battery energy storage systems (BESS) and natural gas resources.

"With full control of Sabah Electricity, the State Government would be in a stronger position to formulate independent energy strategies and attract strategic investments that directly benefit Sabah consumers and industries," he said.

Chan added that a utility company fully controlled by Sabah would also improve accountability, transparency and the speed of decision-making, particularly in addressing electricity-related challenges in rural areas and rapidly developing districts.

As such, he called on the State Government to study the feasibility of gradually acquiring the remaining shares held by TNB and eventually placing Sabah Electricity entirely under Sabah's ownership and management.

"Energy security is national security. Sabah must be empowered to determine its own energy future for the long-term benefit of its people, economy and future generations," he said.