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KOTA KINABALU: Kadamaian Assemblyman Datuk Ewon Benedick proposed that Sabah Electricity (SE) be granted investigative powers under the Electricity Supply Enactment (2024) to enhance its role in enforcing energy regulations in the State.

He said the move is essential in addressing ongoing issues such as electricity theft, which have led to recurring supply problems.

"As an initial step, Sabah Electricity should be empowered with enforcement responsibilities under the Electricity Supply Act 2024, allowing the Sabah Energy Commission to delegate its authority to SE for matters related to enforcement," he said during his speech at the State Legislative Assembly.

Ewon, who is also Minister of Entrepreneurship Development and Cooperatives, pointed out that a reliable and uninterrupted energy supply is crucial for Sabah's economic development.

He stressed Sabah's economy and entrepreneurship sectors is in dire need of stable electricity supply and other basic utilities to drive growth, remain competitive, and attract investment to the State.

"I believe Sabah government is taking proactive measures to improve utility supplies, which will drive economic growth and investment," he added.

The Assemblyman also called for a long-term plan for Sabah Electricity, especially as regulatory powers are now fully under the jurisdiction of the Sabah state government.

"The full transfer of powers to Sabah Electricity within the next seven years requires a comprehensive strategy to ensure the company can operate independently and become a major energy supplier in the State," he said.

Additionally, Ewon proposed that Sabah Electricity should not rely on purchasing power from Independent Power Producers (IPPs). Instead, he suggested the company should generate its own energy as a state-owned entity.

"Given that electricity tariffs are dependent on federal government subsidies, it is high time the Sabah government to strategize and transform Sabah Electricity into a state-owned GLC (Government-Linked Company), capable of generating its own energy and potentially being listed on Bursa Malaysia," he stated.