

Headline	Power tariff hike will hurt small businesses		
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'Power tariff hike will hurt small businesses'

DESPITE an assurance from central bank governor, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng forecasts the looming nationwide hike in electricity tariffs will cut a hole in the pockets of small business owners struggling to keep their shops open, leading to consumers picking up the tab.

Lim voiced concern for small- and medium-enterprises that have to struggle to remain cost-competitive in an increasingly challenging economic environment.

He noted that they will be forced to foot higher electricity bills from Jan 1 when the increase is enforced across the board.

"The sundry shops, coffee shops, barbers and small business owners will have to fork out more to keep their shops open," he said in a statement.

Lim, who is also Penang chief minister, noted that the average tariff for both commercial and industrial consumers will increase by 16.85 per cent.

"More worryingly, the small businesses in the commercial or industrial categories who consume no more than

200kwh monthly will have to suffer a 10 per cent hike in their electricity bills which is grossly unfair and unjustifiable," he said, in response to the recent announcement by the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry on the power hike for consumers that include domestic, commercial and industries.

"The cost of doing business will subsequently increase and it is only to be expected that the prices of goods and services will go up across the board," he said.

The Bagan MP also demanded the ministry give details on the implications of this tariff hike on domestic users in Sabah and Labuan similar to the breakdown provided on the domestic consumers in Peninsular Malaysia.

"We want to know how many and to what degree Sabahans will be impacted by the tariff hike," he said.

He said the ministry also did not provide any breakdown for commercial and industrial consumers.

"The ministry must publish more information with breakdown numbers," he said.