



KEMENTERIAN KERJA RAYA
MALAYSIA

PRESS STATEMENT

PRESS STATEMENT ON THIRD PENANG BRIDGE BY THE WORKS MINISTER

4th August 2016

In his statement yesterday, the YAB Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said that our Ministry is "kurang logik" or lacks logic to request for the existing feasibility and detailed design studies for their RM6.314 billion Penang Tunnel and 3 associated paired roads before giving approval-in-principle for a 3rd Penang Bridge.

The proposal for the 3rd Bridge or Undersea Tunnel or Bridge both come from the Penang State Government. The Penang EXCO Lim Hock Seng had confirmed that the alignment would be the same whether it was for a bridge or for a tunnel - this means that the traffic flow projections in the reports for the tunnel and 3 associated roads would still be valid.

For the benefit of YAB Lim, we remind you that any major transport infrastructure projects - particularly one that crosses the sea - cannot exist on its own and has impact on the traffic flow of the surrounding existing or planned roads and sea routes.

It would be a dereliction of our duties if we were to approve a project that can negatively impact on traffic in surrounding areas or causes difficulties for the nearby ports that will have an impact on the economy of Penang.

It would certainly be illogical for my Ministry to approve a major multi-billion ringgit infrastructure project based on a two page letter alone without the benefit of any supporting documents, route alignments and traffic flow projections.

I take note that the idea to replace the tolled tunnel with a toll-free bridge only came about after the Penang State Government was unable to withstand recent scrutiny from various parties including from YB Dato' Abdul Rahman Dahlan who had questioned why the Penang State Government planned to fully pay for the cost of construction but still give a 30 years toll concession to the private company awarded to construct the tunnel.

It is doubtful that this proposed change would even have come about without this scrutiny and this sudden change to a bridge appears to be a deliberate diversion to escape from such scrutiny.

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At first, YAB Lim accused the Federal Government of not approving their application for a bridge but when I pointed out that the Penang Government had never applied or engaged with us, YAB Lim admitted and said it was because they were not brave enough to apply before.

Following that admission, YAB Lim finally found the courage to write a letter to demand us to approve the 3rd bridge but did not submit any documents

As they had confirmed that the feasibility and detailed design for the 3 paired roads was 100% completed while the reports for the Tunnel was 83% complete, our Ministry requested 5 times over the past 3 months for them to submit these documents to support their application but the Penang Government had repeatedly refused to do so.

Truth to be told, our Ministry is also curious to see what reports that cost the Penang Government RM305 million looks like as we consider these to be highly over-priced - particularly the RM208.755 million cost of the feasibility and detailed design reports for the 20.3km 3 paired roads - of which RM135 million had already been paid by the Penang Government.

As the Penang Government had said last month that the construction start date for the 3 linked roads to the tunnel or bridge has been delayed again to next year when it should have started in 2015, we consider the request for the 3rd bridge to be no longer urgent as it would be similarly delayed.

YAB Lim told the press last week that he can already submit the reports but shockingly, he now says he can only submit by early next year.

I am the Works Minister and I am here to do work for the benefit of all including Penang - not to engage in unnecessary ping-pong press statement politics.

Therefore, I consider this matter closed but will revisit this once the Penang Government is ready to cooperate and the necessary reports are submitted next year as promised by YAB Lim.

DATO' SRI HAJI FADILLAH BIN HAJI YUSOF

Minister

Ministry of Works Malaysia

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