

Headline	Govt urged to lead renewable energy agenda		
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Govt urged to lead renewable energy agenda

By Jonathan Chia

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KUCHING :
Batu Lintang
assemblyman
See Chee How is
hopeful that the
state government
will re-examine

its policy on building the
state's future power generation
capacity and consider leading
the way in advocating and
implementing a renewable
and sustainable energy
agenda in the country.

Speaking during his
welcoming address
at a luncheon talk on
'Building alternative
renewable and
sustainable energy
capacity for economic
growth and development
in Sarawak' which
he hosted
yesterday,
See said the talk
served

as a small and humble start to
examine this significant issue of
global concern.

"With your enthusiastic
support, I have no doubt that
we have a good start, with the
numbers and the needed force
to help nurture and raise public
awareness for the furtherance of
this important task."

However, See noted that there
were many challenges ahead.

He spoke about an incident
earlier this year which involved
a collaboration with residents
of Star Garden to replace four
conventional street light bulbs
with energy-saving light bulbs.

These energy-saving
light bulbs are almost
three times brighter
than conventional
ones and consume
less than 40 per cent
of electricity.

However, not long after,
See said he received a letter
from the Kuching North City
Commission (DBKU), informing

him that Sarawak Energy Bhd
(SEB) had written to them to say
that they will not be responsible
for maintaining these four street
lightings.

"In my meeting with the
Mayor (Datuk Abang Abdul
Wahap Abang Julai) later, I gave
him my assurance that we will
take care of the maintenance of
these street light bulbs. But I
am heartened with DBKU's own
efforts.

"They have installed energy-
saving bulbs, they have tried
solar power-generated street
lightings and even wind-powered
lightings in areas under their
jurisdiction and I have heard
that they are making efforts to
achieve ISO 50000 Standards
which include their commitment
and performance to conserve and
better utilise energy."

During the last State Legislative
Assembly sitting, See had
questioned the state government
on their plans and programmes
to encourage the production
and utilisation of alternative
renewable and sustainable energy
sources such as solar and mini-
hydro to better conserve and
safeguard the environment.

"I received a reply which
in short stated that there are
currently 18 operating renewable
hybrid stations using mini-hydro
and solar systems powering 30
remote villages and there are
12 other hybrid stations under
construction; nine at an early
planning stage.

"In 2016/2017, 50 inaccessible
remote villages or longhouses will
have stand-alone solar systems to
light up their homes."

Despite this, he said that it
appeared that the Ministry
of Public Utilities was
unconvinced that mini-hydro and
solar systems as alternative
renewable energy sources are
economically viable or adequate
and reliable to replace large hydro
power sources.

"Using Batang Ai Hydro

Electric Power (HEP) dam as an
example, the Ministry of Public
Utilities said it will require
108 mini hydropower of 1MW
(megawatt) each to replace Batang
Ai HEP but they are unreliable.
Alternatively, 4,000 hectares of
land will need to be cleared for
solar power systems but yet they
can only supply between four
and five hours of electricity each
day."

See pointed out the ministry
however did not disclose that
Batang Ai HEP alone had flooded
8,500 hectares of land.

"Additionally, with the advanced
technological development
in solar power facilities, only
between 1.5 and five hectares of
land are now needed for a solar
power station to generate 1MW
of power."

He highlighted the fact that
solar, wind and mini-hydropower
systems emitted far less carbon-
dioxide equivalent per kilowatt-
hour when compared to the
natural gas and coal plants as
well as large dams that presently
formed the core of Sarawak's
energy power.

"With the commitments of the
Paris Agreement, our country's
pledge to reduce greenhouse gas
emissions and commitments
of developed countries to
fund and assist in building,
development and implementation
of renewable energy capacity
globally, I hope that the state
government will seize the
opportunity for Sarawak to tap
into the available technology
transfer, climate finance and
capacity building aid from
advanced countries to develop
and promote the use of energy
from alternative renewable
resources, while at the same time,
preserving our depleting fossil
resources."

With the assistance of
experts such as University of
California, Berkeley's professor
of renewable energy Dr Daniel
M Kammen and his team who
had submitted a proposal to the

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state government last year, See said the state had the ability to lead the nation in developing and building its energy capacity from sustainable and renewable sources.

With your enthusiastic support, I have no doubt that we have a good start, with the numbers and the needed force to help nurture and raise public awareness for the furtherance of this important task.

See Chee How, Batu Lintang assemblyman

