

High cost of water supply hit NA

Complaints and queries regarding the high cost of water have been hot topics on the National Assembly hotline since the session opened on June 22.

NA members yesterday debated a new draft law on water supply coming as members of the public complained about rising costs.

The draft law was proposed by Minister of Public Work and Transport Mr Sommath Pholsena before the NA debate.



Members focused on measures to strengthen management and development of supply to ensure sufficient water for public needs.

Director of Vientiane Water Supply Enterprise Mr Daophet Buapha said many Lao people were in the habit of overusing of water.

Therefore, only a change in the system of water billing would affect them.

“We want to change people's habit by increasing water price for those who use a lot of water. If you want to pay less, you need to use less water,” he said.

Mr Daophet said before April, his enterprise had charged foreigners a higher rate than Lao citizens. Now they pay the same, based on the volume of the water use.

“The enterprise is able to supply 160,000 cubic metre of water to Vientiane residents. If public conserves water, it will be enough for our needs.”

He said that the standard water use for one person was 180 litre per day, but people in Laos were using up to 400 litres per person per day.

Under the new bill, consumers using between 0 and 10 cubic metres of water will pay only 500 kip per cubic metre per month.

Those using between 11 and 30 cbm will pay 1,000 kip per cubic metre and those use between 31 and 50 cbm will pay 2,500 kip per cubic metre.

Those using more than 50 cubic metres a month will have to pay 5,000 kip per cubic metre.

The new draft law determines basic principles and measures for management of water supply while encouraging private participation to develop the sector in response to public need.

He said a lack of legislation could hinder participation by investors to jointly develop this infrastructure. The law must facilitate entrepreneurial activity so business operators can operate effectively, he said.

The draft law, comprising 8 parts and 71 articles, will be a guideline for officials to plan, design, build, manage and use water effectively.

Since national liberation, the government has spent a lot of money to develop water supply but has yet to satisfy public need.

By Somsack Pongkhao