



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter To The Editor

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TNB Billing System Upgrade Has Confused And Burdened Consumers

The Consumers' Association of Penang has been receiving many complaints from the public regarding their TNB bills these past two months. Among the complaints received from the public are the long billing cycles causing their bills to be very high, not receiving their July TNB bills and receiving bills with account numbers that are not their own. CAP only recently discovered that consumers are experiencing these problems because TNB is upgrading their billing system.

TNB had issued a Press Statement announcing that some people would be receiving their TNB bills late because of the upgrade. However, the statement was only carried by a few newspapers on 6/8/2016 and can hardly be called "informative". TNB's statement is also about two months too late – if they were going to conduct a system upgrade TNB should have informed the public much earlier and highlighted to them the potential setbacks and inconveniences that they might experience.

It is only after we read a news article in one of our Malay newspapers a few days ago that we finally got some clarification on the complaints we had been receiving, such as:-

- **Long billing cycles causing TNB bills to be more expensive**

If a billing cycle exceeds 31 days for any month, TNB will charge consumers based on the prorated factor – the ratio between the billing period and number of days in the month - for those in the Domestic Tariff block and the Low Voltage Commercial Tariff block.

- **Not receiving their July TNB bills**

Because of the billing system upgrade consumers are going to be receiving their July bills late and some will get their July and August bills together in the month of August.

- **Receiving bills with account numbers that are not their own**

The billing system upgrade has made it necessary for the TNB account numbers to be changed from a 14-digit system to a 12-digit system. Therefore the unfamiliar account numbers stated on consumers' current TNB bills are in fact their new 12-digit account numbers.

To provide all this information to one Malay newspaper to be published is hardly fair or responsible of TNB as the readership is not going to be widespread. This same information should have been given to all the major newspapers and news stations months ago to prepare the public for the effects this change would bring. We are disappointed with TNB's approach on this matter which has seriously confused consumers.

CAP also strongly protests the fact that many consumers are going to be receiving their July and August bills in the month of August. In the article, it is mentioned that TNB will not be cutting off the electricity supply for those who receive their July TNB bill late, but this is irrelevant. *Kais pagi makan pagi, kais petang makan petang* is a Malay proverb that aptly describes the financial status of many Malaysian these days. The question we need to be asking is what is going to happen to the consumers who are burdened with receiving two TNB bills in one month and cannot afford to pay for two months at once. Is their electricity supply going to be safe from getting “cut”?

We say it should be. After all, it was TNB that did not take pre-emptive and proactive measures to deal with the setbacks that their billing system upgrade would cause the public, so why should the public have to be burdened with the consequence of their actions?

The only way for TNB to take responsibility for their actions is for them to waive the July TNB bill for domestic users. CAP asks that the authorities in charge of overseeing “energy” matters, such as the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water and the Energy Commission, see to it that this is done. Better yet, TNB should willingly do this as their way of compensating their customers.

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