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Recently, the media reported on charges issued by Luas (Lembaga Urus Air Selangor) to harvest ground water. We wish to clarify the issue to the public so that a wrong message is not carried. Even though the statement issued by Luas was **vague** the issue at large is not.

The public should be aware that state government has the jurisdiction over surface runoff and ground water only. Surface runoff is basically water that flows on the surface of earth in forms of drain water, streams, rivers, lakes and swamps. Rainwater and surface runoff can seep into the ground and form groundwater. It reaches a level in the ground known as a water table.

The need for legislation for surface runoff and groundwater is important. This will prevent industries from engaging in the uncontrolled use of surface runoff and ground water to reduce their operational costs.

Extracting too much water may adversely affect to the ecosystem of the water body. The legislation provides a check and balance. Only a permitted amount of water can be extracted. Such an amount must not be excessive so as to be a threat to the flora and fauna that live in the ecosystem.

Fomca advocates that the harvesting of rainwater is still the right of consumers both domestic and industrial. Any industry or individual can use rainwater. This is because the individual or business is not draining a readily available water body. Furthermore, rain clouds are not formed within a particular boundary.

Lake and well waters are different entities. Lakes which are dug above a water table will not affect ground water. We can use lakes like this to retain **harvested** rainwater like most farmers do. Unfortunately, wells take water from groundwater. This affects the underground ecosystem and plants on the surface.

The Energy, Water and Communications Ministry and Fomca in our ongoing National Water Conservation Awareness Campaign encourages the public and industry to harvest rainwater in order to reduce treated water consumption for non-potable (non-drinking) use.

So be aware of your rights and practice a sustainable usage of water. Water is already on the way towards being a very expensive commodity if we do not take care of it now.