

All states should adopt law

THE government will implement a new rule in waste management starting in September, where it will be mandatory for households to separate their solid waste before collection.

The new ruling should be seen as a positive step in creating a more efficient and effective waste management system.

With the annual increase in waste generation and heavy reliance on landfilling as a disposal method, it is just a matter of time before a significant problem involving space limitations, health, as well as environmental issues hit our country severely.

The new rule will allow for easier recycling efforts to be taken by individuals and, at the same time, reduce the amount of solid waste being sent to the overflowing waste disposal sites.

It is also being seen as another step to educate and create awareness among Malaysians on the need to protect the environment.

According to the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry, this move will see many household solid waste separated according to several categories, including plastic, paper,

cardboard, glass, metal, food waste, lump waste and farm waste.

According to Section 74 of the Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Management Act 2007, the director-general may give written directions, as he considers fit, to any person for the purpose of ensuring the compliance with this act on the separation, handling and storage of any controlled solid waste in the possession of such person.

Any person who fails to comply with the direction commits an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding RM1,000.

Further, according to Section 108 (2) (g) of the act, it shall be the duty of any person in the country to "separate recyclable solid waste".

The separated waste will be collected according to a schedule to be determined by an appointed concession company.

Sadly, the new ruling will only be enforced in states or jurisdictions that have adopted the act: Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Pahang, Johor, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Perlis and Kedah.

As such, all efforts to protect the environment and to create awareness on going green may not

achieve its final objective.

The act was passed by Parliament on July 17, 2007, and gazetted on Aug 30, 2007, by vesting executive power to the Federal Government to implement solid waste management and public cleansing.

The act establishes concrete policies, plans and strategies of solid waste management and public cleansing in the country.

The act also formulates a proper plan for solid waste management, such as location, facility size, solid waste management scheme and duration of planning, as well as setting standards, specifications and codes of practice to deal with solid waste.

The act came into force on Sept 1, 2011. It is crucial for states that have yet to adopt the act to do so as soon as possible.

Only then can local authorities and state governments, along with the Federal Government, protect the environment by having a proper and uniform waste management system that will benefit all.

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