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# Zuraida: Govt reviewing state-offered lands for affordable housing

BY ADAM AZIZ

KUALA LUMPUR: The federal government is reviewing the suitability of lands that have been offered by state governments for affordable housing purposes, said Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin.

“Before we launched the affordable housing policy, we have written to *menteris besar* [and chief ministers] in the country,” she said.

“Each state has offered lands deemed suitable for the development. The ministry of housing and local government is currently conducting site visits to the lands to determine their suitability, namely the locations and [availability of] appropriate infrastructure,” she told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Zuraida was answering a question from Tan Sri Noh Omar [BN-Tanjong Karang] on whether the federal government was able to obtain state government lands for affordable housing purposes, considering the difficulties faced by some state agencies themselves in obtaining the same.

Zuraida added that the government has issued requests for proposals for at least three housing projects. However, she did not elaborate on whether the lands involved were offered by state governments, or land sizes offered so far.

On steps to keep affordable housing prices low, Zuraida revealed that the ministry has requested utility companies, including electricity, water and telecommunications, to absorb the cost for development of respective utility infrastructure to reduce capital contributions and, ultimately, housing prices.

Other steps taken by the government include giving sales and service tax exemptions for building materials, emphasising the use of cheaper and speedier industrial building system, and seeking lower costs of acquiring lands, such as through requests to state governments.

Under the 2018-2025 National Housing Policy, the government has set a target to develop up to 100,000 units of affordable homes annually between now and 2025, with each unit costing below RM300,000.