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KOTA KINABALU: The three-hour power cuts will come to an end if Sabah consumers are willing to reduce their electricity usage.

Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB) managing director Baharin Din said that during Earth Hour last month, consumption dropped by 50 mega-watts.

And if consumers could collectively save up to 70MW a day until supply returns to normal next month, the company could stop load shedding, he added.

"The idea of voluntary curtailment of power has not been fully explored.

"If two premises use 20 light bulbs each, all we are asking is for each property to switch off 10, so everyone can have electricity.

"The people of Sabah were able to do it during Earth Hour. So if everyone plays their part, there will be no forced load shedding.

"We are asking consumers to do this only until June, as we are in the process of repairing several plants.

"It is a temporary shortage, and this is a case of sharing versus shedding. We are appealing for support from consumers," Baharin said yesterday.

Asked if SESB would approach residents committees and other users such as government

agencies, Baharin said the first step is to get the message out through the media.

Earlier, SESB senior general manager for operations Peter Lajumin said the company has stopped transmitting power to the east coast through the electricity grid system over the last few days, as there was not enough electricity on the west coast.

He also said the average power disruption rate per person in Sabah dropped to one-and-a-half days last year, compared with three days in 2005.