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2nd Reading of the Coastal Protection Bill - Opening Speech by Minister Grace Fu

Speeches

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6 March 2026

Opening Speech by Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, at the 2nd Reading of the Coastal Protection and Other Amendments Bill on 6 March 2026.

1. Mr Speaker, Sir, I move, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

INTENT

2. Since our early days as a trading port, Singapore's destiny has been shaped by the sea. Access to the sea brought us opportunities, enabled our nation to thrive, and allowed us to define our place in the world.
3. But the sea which has served as our lifeblood could also pose a threat to our very existence. Singapore's Third National Climate Change Study (V3) projects that our sea levels may rise up to 1.15m by the end of this century, reaching up to 5 metres above today's mean sea level when coupled with storm surges and high tides.
4. This is serious. It means that around 30% of Singapore could be flooded by seawater. Our businesses along the coast, such as shipyards or ports that rely on having

access to the sea, will be at risk of coastal flooding. In fact, Singapore already experiences coastal flooding during spring tides today, resulting in some parts of East Coast Park and Pulau Ubin being flooded. If we do nothing, places like Changi Beach Park or East Coast Park could become memories of the past.

5. We must therefore embark on coastal protection against sea level rise, to protect our land, our people, and our livelihoods. In 2020, to prepare Singapore for this long-term endeavour, we amended the Public Utilities Act (PUA) to designate PUB, Singapore's National Water Agency, as our coastal protection agency.
6. Planning, design and construction for coastal protection takes time. The implementation needs to be carefully phased, to take into account the resources available and to tie in with other redevelopment timelines.
7. We are thus introducing the Coastal Protection and Other Amendments Bill, or "the Bill" for short, principally to introduce legislative and regulatory levers to undergird coastal protection work moving forward. These new coastal protection elements will be introduced into the existing Sewerage and Drainage Act (SDA), which will be renamed the Sewerage, Drainage and Coastal Protection Act (SDCPA).
8. I will go through the Bill in several parts.
9. **First**, I will explain our approach to coastal protection, and PUB's role as the national coastal protection agency.
10. **Second**, who should undertake responsibility for coastal protection.
11. **Third**, how PUB will ensure completion of Singapore's coastal protection.
12. **Fourth**, when coastal protection obligations for landowners will be imposed.
13. **Fifth**, PUB's enforcement powers.
14. **Sixth**, related and miscellaneous amendments pertaining to PUB's functions.

#1: OUR APPROACH TO COASTAL PROTECTION, AND PUB'S ROLE AS THE NATIONAL COASTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

15. First, on our approach to coastal protection, and PUB's role as the national coastal protection agency.

16. The goal of coastal protection is to stop seawater from flooding our land. This will protect our assets and livelihoods, and preserve the functionality of the land.
17. To do so, we will need to establish a continuous line of defence that will protect against permanent coastal flooding caused by sea level rise, as well as transient coastal flooding from high tides and storm surges. The Bill will provide PUB with the powers to determine the location of this continuous line of defence and gazette this line as an Absolute Protection Boundary, or APB in short.
18. PUB will decide where the Absolute Protection Boundaries are after carrying out studies on the different regions of Singapore.
19. However, we may want to allow for transient coastal flooding in some places. There are some areas where access to the sea should be retained, such as beaches and coastal parks. We will therefore gazette Protection Boundaries to delineate the boundaries behind which the land must be protected from permanent coastal flooding.
20. In relation to these Boundaries, the Bill sets out four categories of Prescribed Places, which would have corresponding requirements of coastal protection measures to be put in place.
21. The first category comprises Prescribed Places at the Absolute Protection Boundaries. These will need to be protected against permanent and transient coastal flooding.
22. The second category will comprise Prescribed Places bound by two boundary lines, the Absolute Protection Boundary on the landward side of the Area, and Protection Boundary on the seaward side. These places are known as “Transiently Floodable Areas (Coastal)”. These need to be protected against permanent flooding, but need not be protected against transient coastal flooding.
23. The third and fourth categories of Prescribed Places are Sheltered Structures within transiently floodable areas, such as F&B venues, as well as Nearshore and Offshore Structures like boardwalks and jetties. Where these structures need to be functional at all times, they would need to be protected against permanent and transient coastal flooding. That said, exemptions can be sought if these structures can be allowed to flood transiently.

24. Not every existing land plot by the coast will be a Prescribed Place. For example, PUB has adopted the Long Island project for City-East Coast under which the Absolute Protection Boundary will be located on new reclaimed land and the adjoining tidal gates that will be built.
25. Another example is the Greater Southern Waterfront which will have coastal barriers installed across the entrances of Keppel Harbour and Cruise Bay, to protect the land areas encircled by them. The residential and commercial areas along HarbourFront and Keppel Bay, as protected by these coastal barriers, will therefore not be Prescribed Places.

#2: WHO SHOULD UNDERTAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COASTAL PROTECTION

26. The Bill provides for coastal protection responsibilities to be undertaken by owners of Prescribed Places, or “landowners” for short. This is our current practice for coastal management. Today, landowners along the coast already protect their buildings and infrastructure against coastal erosion. From time to time, they top up the crest level or repair their coastal structures although they do so without direction from PUB and do not necessarily join the coastal structures up with their neighbours.
27. We believe that this approach of decentralising the responsibility of implementing coastal protection measures will achieve a solution that will work for the owner and achieve the public good of coastal protection. Our land is scarce, and we should optimise it where possible. Therefore, we want to provide landowners the flexibility to select coastal protection measures that best meet their land use and waterfront needs. This will also avoid extensive reallocation or acquisition of land at the national level by the Government, which could potentially sterilise the valuable coastal land that we have.
28. Under the new Section 30E of the Bill, each landowner must ensure that there is a coastal protection measure for the Prescribed Place by a stipulated date. All landowners within the same region will have to complete their measures by the date to accord protection to all within the region. These owners include the Government, Statutory Boards, as well as lessees with leases longer than 3 years. The majority of the coastal protection measures will be implemented by the Government and Statutory Boards as they own about 70% of the coastline.
29. As we engaged stakeholders, indeed it became clear to us that different landowners require customised coastal protection measures to suit their individual needs. The

measures differ because of their unique land use and operational requirements. For instance, for a shipyard with a dry dock, he may choose to build a seawall along the perimeter of the dry dock except the seaward entrance. Landowners may also have preferred timelines to carry out their construction work. It would not be practical, nor desirable, for the Government to implement standard coastal protection measures for such a wide range of land uses, from ports, ship building yards to petrochemical plants.

30. We have engaged the vast majority of affected landowners prior to tabling this Bill. During our engagements with them, some shared that they had not factored the cost for additional coastal protection measures when the land was leased or purchased. We have considered their views and will be supporting landowners to fulfil their obligations through a few ways:
- First, we will provide a capital grant. The grant will cover the cost of studies, services diversion, as well as the construction necessary to implement coastal protection measures. The grant will be sized according to cost norms, considering prevailing market rates and inflation. Landowners can apply for the capital grant after the legal obligation to implement measures has been formally imposed on them. The total grant amount will be split into reimbursement tranches to help with landowners' planning and cashflow. We will further develop the grant details and share more information when ready.
 - Second, we will offer technical advice and consultations to landowners. At the same time, we have been levelling up industry competency on coastal protection through training programmes. This will ensure that the local engineering industry has the proficiency to provide professional services to landowners to take on these projects and implement the measures to the standard required by PUB.

#3: HOW PUB WILL ENSURE COMPLETION OF SINGAPORE'S COASTAL PROTECTION

31. While coastal protection works are undertaken by individual landowners, PUB will coordinate the works around the entire island, so that we can safeguard the long-term functionality of these coastal protection measures.
32. To keep seawater out, coastal protection measures need to be connected to each other, and the connection must be watertight. Section 30G requires landowners to

connect their coastal protection measures with their adjacent neighbours. It also details how the responsibility of performing the connection will be allocated. Where necessary, Section 30P allows PUB to require neighbours to permit entry to their premises or render assistance, for the purposes of connecting the coastal protection measures.

33. PUB will maintain centralised control and oversight of coastal protection through Section 30F and 30H. Landowners will be required to seek PUB's approval before undertaking coastal protection works, or before altering existing coastal protection measures. Similar to other utility corridors, works within a designated coastal protection safety corridor, or Safety Corridor for short, will be regulated under the new Section 30N.
34. The coastal protection measures and the Safety Corridor will be delineated in the Coastal Protection Interpretation Plan, or Interpretation Plan, under Section 30C. This will be hosted on digital systems accessible to the public, where relevant details of coastal protection measures, and the locations of the Safety Corridor will be available.
35. Section 30I requires landowners to maintain, repair, inspect and monitor their measures. Under Section 30O, it will be an offence to damage the measures. Should there be any observed damage to the measures, landowners will be required under Section 30J to inform PUB and submit a rectification plan.
36. For landowners with deployable barriers, Section 30K states that regulations may require these landowners to deploy the barriers before an imminent coastal flooding event, as required by PUB.
37. PUB will develop forecasting abilities to anticipate potential coastal floods, so that early warning can be provided to landowners in a timely manner.
38. To ensure public safety in transiently floodable areas along the coast, where transient flooding might occur, landowners of premises within the areas will be required under Section 30L to prepare a flood response plan and periodically conduct drills based on the flood response plan.

#4: WHEN COASTAL PROTECTION OBLIGATIONS FOR LANDOWNERS WILL BE IMPOSED

38. As I explained earlier, we will publish the locations of the Absolute Protection Boundaries and Protection Boundaries for each region after our studies are completed. We will do so when we have a clearer plan on the recommended coastal protection measures of the region.
39. To provide landowners of Prescribed Places with sufficient lead time to fulfil their obligations, PUB will endeavour to inform them of their obligations about 10 years ahead of the expected completion date. PUB will send out a First Notification to them after it has identified the indicative location of the continuous line of defence. The Second Notification will follow later to inform them of the specific coastal protection requirements, and the date by which the coastal protection measures must be in place. Landowners will have at least 5 years from the Second Notification to implement their measures.
40. We will support landowners in fulfilling their obligations by publishing a Coastal Protection Code of Practice, or "the Code" for short. PUB aims to do so later this year, ahead of issuing the First Notifications. This will guide landowners and the industry on how to fulfil their coastal protection obligations. Landowners will have the flexibility to design the coastal protection measures around their needs, so long as they comply with the requirements stipulated in the Code.
41. As climate science continues to evolve, we will strike a balance between having protection early and overcommitting resources. We will want to have agility and flexibility in our coastal protection plans so that solutions can be adaptive to advancing climate projections and engineering solutions.

#5: PUB'S ENFORCEMENT POWERS

42. The fifth group of amendments will confer powers to enable PUB to carry out its coastal protection functions, deter undesirable behaviours, and provide immunities for officers to carry out their duties.
43. There will be penalties for actions that affect the continuous line of defence, and for failure to comply with a written notice from PUB. Our guiding principle for penalties is to ensure they are comparable to similar offences within the current SDA and other Acts.
44. The Bill will amend Section 43 of the SDA to provide PUB with emergency powers of entry, if, for example, the continuous line of defence is not yet complete due to

delays, or a landowner cannot be contacted to deploy the coastal protection measure. This is especially important when an imminent coastal flooding event is forecasted. As a last resort, PUB may also use the power of forced entry to enter the premises to address the coastal flood risk.

45. This power of forced entry will only be used judiciously, and only where there is an imminent coastal flooding event. I would like to reassure Members that we have set a high bar to activate this clause.
46. Similar to other Acts, to aid enforcement, the CP Bill will provide authorised officers with immunities under Section 71 of the SDCPA so that they can confidently carry out their duties. For the immunities to apply, authorised officers need to have acted in good faith and with reasonable care in the course of their actions.

#6: RELATED AND MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS PERTAINING TO PUB'S VARIOUS FUNCTIONS

47. Finally, the Bill amends the Significant Infrastructure Government Loan Act 2021 to adopt the new definition of "coastal management" inserted in the PUA by the Bill, as well as amends Section 7 of the Government Proceedings Act 1956 to include coastal management and sewerage.
48. There are also amendments to reflect the intended scope of Subsidiary Legislation on the Waterborne Tax and the Water Conservation Tax, and to regulate activities in reservoirs and waterways.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

49. We have engaged the public and will continue to do so as we work on our coastal protection plans. Through *Our Coastal Conversations*, PUB's flagship dialogue for coastal protection, we have engaged the community, including residents, business owners, recreational and nature groups, on what they hope to see at our coastlines and what they value about our coastal spaces.

CONCLUSION

50. Even as PUB coordinates the overall approach for coastal protection, we will work with landowners and support them in fulfilling their obligations. The proposed

amendments to the SDA which I mentioned will commence this year. That said, affected landowners' legal obligations will only begin taking effect closer to early 2030s, after the Absolute Protection Boundaries and Protection Boundaries are gazetted.

51. Today, as we stand on the firm foundations laid by our pioneers, so too must we build the safeguards for tomorrow. By laying a strong foundation for coastal protection, we ensure that future generations inherit a resilient and liveable Singapore, on which they can build their dreams for an even better and prosperous Singapore.
52. Sir, I beg to move.

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