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Speeches

2nd Reading for Coastal Protection Bill - Closing Speech by Minister Grace Fu

6 March 2026

Closing 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, I would like to thank the Members for their support and comments on the Bill. Allow me to run through the queries and concerns raised by Members, which I will address in five broad themes.

#1: RESPONSIBILITY FOR COASTAL PROTECTION

2. First, on who should be responsible for coastal protection. Ms Poh Li San, Ms Hany Soh and Ms Lee Hui Ying asked if the Government should instead implement coastal protection on behalf of landowners, to maximise efficiency and coordination.
3. Fundamentally, landowners should be responsible for the coastal protection measures on their own land. This will allow for the optimisation of the very scarce and precious land that we have. Having the Government centrally implement solutions will be sub-optimal, since it may not be feasible to account for every landowner's unique needs and timelines. Landowners are most familiar with their sites and are better placed to implement coastal protection measures that best meet their business

needs. Indeed, in our engagements, landowners expressed concern on the potential disruption when enacting the coastal protection measures and wanted flexibility to dovetail coastal protection works with their redevelopment plans and business cycles.

4. Centralised specialised measures, like the barriers we are proposing for the Greater Southern Waterfront, or the reclaimed Long Island, are also not always relevant to the land uses in the region nor cost effective.
5. That said, we will facilitate the process as much as possible. For the companies that lease industrial land from JTC, which form the vast majority of the private landowners, PUB is working with JTC to explore a centralised procurement model, as well as other options that can support JTC's lessees in fulfilling their coastal protection obligations.
6. The responsibility for coastal protection will apply only to landowners of Prescribed Places. Ms Nadia Samdin asked if we would charge landowners who will be protected by centralised coastal protection schemes, such as the coastal barriers at the Greater Southern Waterfront. We will not be recovering the cost of these measures from the landowners, just like how we are not imposing any costs on inland landowners. These costs will be borne by the Government, who will own, implement and operate the coastal barriers.
7. We will gazette the APB in Subsidiary Legislation, and publish it in the Coastal Protection Interpretation Plan, which would be discoverable during legal conveyancing.
8. These efforts would help address Ms Nadia Samdin's, Ms Hany Soh's as well as Ms Poh Li San's points on ensuring that there is no information asymmetry and that coastal protection obligations do not fall through the cracks in the event of a change in land ownership. In addition, ahead of the formal gazetting, PUB will work towards publishing the indicative locations of the Absolute Protection Boundaries and the Protection Boundaries in the public domain, so that prospective lessees and landowners will be aware of their potential obligations.
9. Ms Cassandra Lee also asked about liabilities and responsibilities arising from the transfer of land ownership. Our principle is that landowners will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the coastal protection measures on their land. When there is a transfer of ownership, the transfer of liability is no different from when

property changes hands today. In addition, the previous landowner would have had to engage a Qualified Person to certify that the structure is up to standard, before PUB approves it as a coastal protection measure. Landowners would also have to regularly inspect and maintain any coastal protection measures they have, according to PUB's standards.

10. Ms Cassandra Lee had questions on what happens if there are multiple owners, and what their respective obligations would be. Under the new Section 2D of the Bill, the Government will make clear in regulations whether the lessor or the lessee is considered for the relevant coastal protection obligations. On the separate question of co-ownership, we currently do not have any such cases. However, should this scenario arise, co-owners will each be responsible for coastal protection obligations.

#2: HOW PUB WILL COORDINATE AMONG LANDOWNERS

11. The second set of questions covers how PUB will play a coordinating role among landowners, especially where the coastal protection measures must join up to form the continuous line of defence. Ms Lee Hui Ying spoke about the importance of preserving critical knowledge of the coastal protection measures, as land may change hands. Under the Bill, landowners will need to submit relevant reports and drawings, including as-built drawings and maintenance reports, to PUB. PUB will also keep records of the reports and drawings, and can require a transfer of the records to the incoming landowner when there is a change in land ownership.
12. Ms Valerie Lee, Ms Nadia Samdin, Ms Poh Li San and Ms Lee Hui Ying asked about the challenges on the ground for landowners, and how PUB would facilitate coordination so that measures are connected and watertight. I would like to reassure Members that PUB will facilitate coordination among affected landowners during the planning and implementation stages. The Bill has provided for this coordination role. Section 30G allows PUB to provide as-built drawings or plans of the neighbouring plot to a landowner if necessary to ensure that the connection is effected.
13. PUB aims to publish the Coastal Protection Code of Practice later this year. This Code of Practice will set out the baseline planning, design, operation and maintenance requirements for landowners' compliance. It will also spell out what landowners need to take note of when connecting their measures, such as designing for watertightness.

14. Where necessary, PUB will use its enforcement powers to ensure the continuous line of defence is not compromised. This includes the scenario that Ms Lee Hui Ying asked about, for companies who face short-term liquidity challenges and are unable to maintain their coastal protection measures, or even noncompliant landowners who fail to fulfil their coastal protection responsibilities.
15. First, PUB has power under Sections 41 and 44 to step in and undertake maintenance and repair works to ensure the functionality of the continuous line of defence, and to recover the cost as necessary from the landowner subsequently.
16. Second, PUB has powers of forced entry, which we will use in the scenario where there is an imminent coastal flood, but the landowner does not have a fully implemented coastal protection measure in place and is unresponsive or uncontactable, notwithstanding efforts to contact them. When activating such powers of forced entry, PUB officers will be required to seek PUB senior management's approval before proceeding with forced entry into these premises.
17. PUB will do so to either activate a deployable measure or put in place an interim measure. This would only be used as a last resort when the officers have exhausted all other available options, including the deployment of measures outside of the premises. It is vital for PUB to have the forced entry power in such a scenario, to join up the continuous line of defence and ensure public safety and protect assets.

#3: FUNDING FOR COASTAL PROTECTION

18. Third, on funding support. Ms Valerie Lee and Ms Nadia Samdin asked if maintenance of coastal protection measures will be funded through the grant. We are still working out the grant details, and more information will be released when ready. The intent of the grant is to fund the necessary costs of putting in place the coastal protection measure. We have assessed that the maintenance required of measures such as seawalls and revetments are minimal, and that this would not be substantially different from how landowners might maintain their existing seawalls and revetments today.
19. Ms Lee Hui Ying also asked how the grant will be tracked and how it will account for changes in land ownership. We are considering reimbursing the landowner in tranches. This would allow us to monitor the progress of works. Should there be a change in landownership before the completion date, the new landowner has the

option of using the previous set of plans, or submitting a fresh set of plans to PUB for approval.

#4: PREPARING THE INDUSTRY

20. Next, on preparing the industry. We are ramping up efforts to prepare the local industry as we embark on coastal protection. There are two main groups here – the consultants and the construction contractors that will put in place the coastal protection measures, and the flood protection managers that will assist the landowner with meeting the coastal protection requirements.
21. On the issue of capacity building, Ms Cassandra Lee asked if we would consider developing a list of contractors that landowners can engage and I believe Mr Dennis Tan made the same point. PUB currently does not have any plans to maintain a list of pre-approved contractors.
22. The coastal protection measures that landowners need to implement are unlikely to be significantly different from the seawalls, revetments or embankments that are seen in Singapore today. We are surrounded by sea and we do have coastal protection measures today so coastal landowners would likely be familiar with contractors involved in such works.
23. The intent of appointing flood protection managers is to have trained personnel who can assist landowners in fulfilling their coastal protection obligations, such as inspecting and maintaining the measures.
24. To ensure the flood protection managers are well-positioned for their roles, we will work with Professional Bodies and industry associations to run training courses and accreditation, and we will release details in due course.

#5: MANAGING IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

25. The last group of questions relates to the impact to the environment. Very important questions, and I am sure many groups of nature lovers, members of the public, local community groups will be also keen to know how the coastline will be affected by coastal protection measures. And indeed, we place a lot of emphasis on upfront site studies, in engagements, in listening very closely, in discussing and the exchange of ideas with relevant groups so that we can come together to agree on a set of workable designs. That's done at the site study level. Ms Cassandra Lee also asked

whether Environmental Impact Assessments, or EIAs, will be required. We would like to assure the Member that coastal protection works in or near sensitive areas, or that have potential transboundary impact, will need to undergo in-depth consultation with technical agencies on the site's potential ecological and biodiversity value. If there is potentially significant environmental impact, agencies will require an environmental study to assess the full impact of the works, and develop more extensive mitigation measures. So, PUB will have to conform and work within the EIA framework.

26. Ms Lee Hui Ying, Ms Nadia Samdin, Mr Andre Low and Mr Dennis Tan asked how we will encourage landowners to adopt nature-based solutions or to maintain some of their heritage value, and whether there will be any technical guidance. During our site-specific studies, we engage the community and nature groups to determine the location of the measures to preserve and encourage biodiversity where possible, including for example whether the continuous line of defence can be set behind mangroves to minimise the impact to them. This was done as part of PUB's "Our Coastal Conversations" for the Sungei Buloh area for example. So my point is, the consideration for the environment, for the conservation of nature, and the protection of biodiversity, is done at the site study stage. When that is done - after consulting all relevant stakeholders, after arriving at the solution that we think is optimal - that itself will be developed into detailed requirements for the Prescribed Places to be in the Interpretation Plan and to be gazetted. So by the time the landowners receive specific requirements in their second notification, the consideration is already done. We would have moved back from protected areas, the line would have been drawn behind, therefore impacting the owners. So what the owners would do, would be limited in terms of environmental protection, although there are some considerations when it comes to using environmentally-friendly, hybrid solutions, which over time we hope to include in our Code of Practice, that landowners can then include in their specific sites.
27. This Bill does not dictate the site-specific study process, and we will follow the prevailing EIA framework. Landowners have the flexibility to determine the coastal protection measures that best meet their land needs. As part of the Coastal Protection and Flood Management Research Programme, there is on-going research to assess the efficacy of hybrid nature-based solutions for coastal protection. Where applicable, these nature-based solutions will be shared in future editions of the Code of Practice. I would just like to repeat what SPS Goh Hanyan has said in the COS - that we are going to publish a guidebook that's called the Flood-Resilient Developments Guidebook that is developed through an Alliance-for-Action on how

we can incorporate some of these design elements. This guide will allow landowners to have a collection of references that may be easier for them to consider as they carry out their works.

CONCLUSION

28. Mr Speaker, in Chinese please.
29. 海岸防护工作至关重要，这攸关我们的日常生活与安危。《海岸防护法案》有助我国在沿海地带建立一道连贯的防护线，抵御海平面上升带来的威胁，以保护我们的人民、资产和生计。法案通过后，土地持有者可以因地制宜，按自身机构需求，采取相应的海岸防护措施。
30. 作为监管机构，公用事业局将透过政府宪报正式公告“全面防护界线”和“防护界线”的范围，以划定“指定场所”。当局也将确保相邻地段的海岸防护措施能够妥善连接。我们将与土地持有者们接洽，从中协调，确保他们密切合作采取相应措施。当局也会提供技术建议和津贴，协助他们履行海岸防护义务。我们感谢各位议员针对如何更好地支持土地持有者提出的建议。我们会慎重考虑。
31. 沿海土地持有者当前为海岸防护所付出的共同努力，将为我国海岸防护奠定坚实的基础，让世世代代的子孙从中受惠。政府将与人民齐心协力，携手应对因气候变化而持续上升的海平面，实施长期的海岸防护措施，共同建设一个更具韧性、安全和繁荣的新加坡。
32. Mr Speaker, coastal protection is a long-term endeavour to protect our people, assets and livelihoods. Coastal protection is not a burden that reduces business competitiveness; rather, it is an investment to ensure business continuity in a world where climate risks will become more apparent. As Mr Andre Low has explained so passionately, there could be new opportunities generated for us as we build up expertise and experience in coastal protection. This Bill lays the foundation to ensure a continuous line of defence that will protect Singapore against sea level rise for the next 50, 100 years and more. Together, we will work together for a more resilient and prosperous Singapore, amidst the rising seas.
33. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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