

[Home](#) > [Latest news](#) > [Second Reading of the Resource Sustainability \(Amendment\) Bill](#)

Speeches

Second Reading of the Resource Sustainability (Amendment) Bill

21 March 2023

This article has been migrated from an earlier version of the site and may display formatting inconsistencies.

OPENING SPEECH BY DR AMY KHOR, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT, FOR THE SECOND READING OF THE RESOURCE SUSTAINABILITY (AMENDMENT) BILL ON 21 MARCH 2023

1.Mr Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

INTRODUCTION

2.Three years ago, I stood in this Chamber to introduce the Resource Sustainability Act 2019 (or "RSA"), which is a key part of our Zero Waste Masterplan.

- a. The Act put in place a systems-level approach that mandated key responsibilities to support re-use and recycling nation-wide.
- b. It set out the legal framework to address our three priority waste streams: an extended producer responsibility scheme for e-waste, a mandatory reporting framework for packaging, and mandatory segregation and treatment of food waste.

3.We have seen the law take effect since.

- a. Over 700 e-waste collection points are deployed across Singapore, and over 9,000 tonnes of e-waste have been collected for recycling.
- b. Companies submitted their first reports for the Mandatory Packaging Reporting scheme last year.
- c. We see the first fruits of our shift from a linear take-make-throw economy to a circular one, where waste is turned into resources to be put to good use again.

4.Our sustainability movement has since gained momentum.

- a. We launched the Singapore Green Plan 2030 two years ago, with a comprehensive national agenda for sustainable development.
- b. Last year, we raised our national climate target to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, affirming Singapore's strong commitment to climate action.
- c. To move decisively towards this goal, we passed the Carbon Pricing (Amendment) Bill to ensure our carbon pricing regime supports the transition to a low-carbon future.

INTENT OF THE BILL

5.Today's Resource Sustainability (Amendment) Bill marks the next step in our national sustainability agenda.

6. We are introducing three new measures to address packaging waste and food waste:

- a. A disposable carrier bag charge at supermarkets;
- b. A beverage container return scheme; and
- c. A food waste reporting framework for industrial and commercial premises

7. These measures are also intended to spark behaviour change.

- a. They are a call for everyone to act, participate, and take a stake in Singapore's zero waste journey.
- b. To shift from a throwaway culture towards a more sustainable paradigm – one that is characterised by mindful consumption and the sustainable habits of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

SINGAPORE'S APPROACH TOWARDS PLASTIC AND PLASTIC POLLUTION

8. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are introducing the disposable carrier bag charge and the beverage container return scheme in the context of a global movement against plastic pollution. So, I would like to take some time to explain Singapore's approach towards plastics and plastic pollution.

9. Plastics, which are made from non-renewable fossil fuels, contribute to our carbon emissions when they are produced, transported, and incinerated at end-of-life. Plastic pollution, especially in the form of transboundary marine litter, is a global problem, spoiling our environment and causing harm to wildlife. Curbing our use of plastics would protect our environment and conserve finite resources.

10. However, plastics, including single use plastics, have many important uses and continue to be essential in many aspects of our daily lives.

- a. For example, it is a key component in personal protective equipment and disposable masks.
- b. Many Singaporeans also use plastic bags to dispose of trash hygienically.

11. Plastics are not the enemy here. The littering, wasteful use, and unnecessary disposal of plastics are.

12. While we share a common global problem of plastic pollution, we do not necessarily share a common solution. Every country has a different context, characterised by unique circumstances.

13. Take littering, for instance. Many countries are plagued by indiscriminate littering of plastics. Inadequate or poorly maintained waste disposal facilities can also cause plastics to leak into the environment.

- a. In Singapore, our strong stance against littering, along with an effective waste management system, has limited the leakage of plastics.

14. Likewise, because plastics can persist in the environment for many years if they are directly landfilled, some countries are introducing regulations to ban or restrict single-use plastics, and companies are responding by switching to biodegradable substitutes like paper, biodegradable plastics, or wood.

- a. However, biodegradable materials do not offer the same incremental benefit in Singapore, where all incinerable waste is not directly landfilled, but is either recycled or properly disposed of at waste-to-energy plants.
- b. In addition, every material type requires precious resources like water, energy, fossil fuels, and trees for their production, transportation, and disposal.
- c. All these materials also leave behind a carbon footprint.

15. Hence, the most effective way to reduce our environmental impact is to reduce our use of all types of materials, not just plastics.

- a. And where we cannot eliminate the use of materials, we need to find effective ways of segregating them for recycling where possible.
- b. This is where the Resource Sustainability (Amendment) Bill comes in.
- c. With the disposable carrier bag charge, we hope to nudge Singaporeans to reduce their use of disposable carrier bags, including plastic bags.
- d. And with the beverage container return scheme, we will put in place a better system to extract clean and valuable streams of plastic and metal recyclables.

16. Let me explain each initiative.

DISPOSABLE CARRIER BAG CHARGE

17. The disposable carrier bag charge is first and foremost, a behavioural nudge.

- a. Disposable carrier bags will remain available at retail establishments, but making the cost of the bag visible in supermarkets prompts us to pause and consider how many we really need.
- b. It is a reminder to bring our own reusable bags and to reduce the use of disposables – an essential feature of sustainable living.
- c. The charge was a recommendation of a 2020 Citizens' Workgroup, and we have engaged the public and supermarket operators extensively on the policy details.

18. A new Part 4A will be introduced to give effect to the charge, which will commence on 3 Jul this year.

- a. Under section 23F, a registered retailer will be required to charge a minimum of 5 cents per bag provided to customers. We have kept the minimum charge low to moderate the cost impact on shoppers, while encouraging them to be mindful of the number of bags they take.
- b. We will prescribe that operators of SFA-licensed supermarkets with an annual turnover of more than \$100 million will be required to register with NEA under Section 23B. c. Registered retailers may apply to be deregistered if their annual turnover does not exceed \$100 million for each of 3 consecutive years, or if they are no longer a regulated retailer.
- d. Section 23H will require registered retailers to communicate this charge to their customers and set it out separately in receipts where provided. This will strengthen the behavioural nudge.
- e. To monitor compliance, Section 23I will require registered retailers to report data to NEA.
- f. For public accountability and transparency on the use of proceeds, Section 23K will require registered retailers to publish information on the number of bags issued, the amount of proceeds collected, and how the proceeds were used.

BEVERAGE CONTAINER RETURN SCHEME

19. The Bill will also give effect to a beverage container return scheme.

- a. This is an extended producer responsibility scheme, where producers are made responsible for the collection and recycling of beverage containers like plastic bottles and metal cans that they put on the market.
- b. Producers typically rely on a scheme operator to carry out these responsibilities.
- c. A deposit will be collected for each beverage product covered by the scheme (or "covered beverage product"), and refunded fully when empty beverage containers are returned at designated return points.

20. While the scheme is well-established in many jurisdictions around the world, it is the first in Southeast Asia and one of the first few in Asia.

- a. The scheme will be a pathfinder for Singapore in our move towards a circular economy, especially for plastics.
- b. Singapore's recycling rate for plastics is low, at only 6%.
- c. The scheme will aggregate a stream of clean and high-quality plastic and metal recyclables.
- d. The plastic bottles collected will comprise mostly PET (polyethylene terephthalate), a valuable fraction that is highly sought after by companies looking to use a higher proportion of recycled PET (or "rPET") in their containers to fulfil their sustainability commitments. This rPET can be manufactured into new containers, breathing life into the circular model.

21. The beverage container return scheme was a recommendation of a 2019 Citizens' Workgroup.

- a. To design a scheme suitable for Singapore, my Ministry and the National Environment Agency conducted over two years of engagements with stakeholders.

22. Let me share the details of the framework.

- a. I announced at MSE's Committee of Supply debates that the scheme will cover plastic bottles and metal cans with volumes ranging from 150ml to 3 litres. These have high material value, and are easy to collect, compact and recycle.
- b. I also shared that an 80% return rate target will be imposed on the scheme operator. We will move progressively towards this and set a return rate target of 60% and 70% in the first and second year respectively. At the steady state of 80%, this is estimated to amount to around 800 million beverage containers collected for recycling annually.
- c. Now, on to further details of the scheme. d. We will be prescribing a deposit amount of 10 cents per container to begin with. This amount takes into account public feedback, as well as the experience of other jurisdictions. In a recent REACH public consultation, the majority of respondents (84%) indicated that a deposit amount of 10 cents or higher would be suitable. A higher deposit would encourage participation and a higher return rate, but we do not want the deposit to be too high such that it deters purchases of pre-packaged beverages. Hence, on balance, we determined that a 10 cents deposit per container would suffice to help achieve an 80% return rate target.
- e. To ensure a robust return point network, SFA-licensed supermarkets with a floor area of more than 200m², which comprises about 400 supermarkets, will be required to set up return points. Supermarkets are ideal for this role as they are major sales channels of beverages and preferred by respondents in our public consultations as return point locations. This approach of deploying return points at supermarkets is proven to be efficient and associated with high return rates in overseas jurisdictions. To enhance convenience and encourage consumer participation, we will also work with the scheme operator and other stakeholders to establish additional return points in other accessible locations in the community.

23. To give effect to the scheme, we will introduce a new Part 4B.

- a. Section 23O will require all producers, that is, importers and manufacturers of covered beverage products, to join the licensed scheme.
- b. Section 23P will require containers of covered beverage products to be labelled: first, with a deposit mark for customers to identify covered beverage products, and second, with a barcode to facilitate the acceptance of empty beverage containers at return points.
- c. Section 23Q makes it clear that the deposit is not part of the price of the beverage product, the beverage container, or the use of the beverage container, and is therefore not subject to GST.
- d. The deposit, which is first provided by the producer to the scheme operator under Section 23R, must be collected by every supplier for each covered beverage product the supplier sells.
- e. Section 23S mandates that certain persons must set up return points, and Section 23U requires return point operators to refund the deposit when an empty beverage container is returned, except under certain circumstances, such as if the deposit mark or barcode is so damaged that it cannot be read or scanned.

24. We will also be amending Part 6 of the RSA, which provides for the licensing of the producer responsibility scheme operator.

25. For the beverage container return scheme, a not-for-profit, industry-led scheme operator is preferred. This is similar to successful schemes in other jurisdictions such as Norway and Denmark.

- a. As the scheme is owned and run by the industry, the scheme operator will be able to tap on the industry's capabilities and resources. It will also have a strong incentive to operate it efficiently and effectively, to keep scheme costs low for all parties.
- b. I am happy to share that a number of beverage producers have expressed interest to jointly support the establishment of the scheme operator.
- c. My Ministry and NEA will continue to engage industry players on the appointment of a suitable scheme operator. More details will be announced in due course.

26. The scheme operator will be licensed under the existing Part 6, with a few additions.

- a. There is a need to safeguard the interests of various stakeholders, for example if the scheme operator is led by larger producers. A new Section 29A will enable the Minister to prescribe requirements for up to one third of the scheme operator's key appointment holders, and to require the scheme operator to obtain NEA's approval for these key

appointments.

b. To deter the beverage container return scheme operator from missing the return rate target, Section 32 will be amended to introduce a new, higher financial penalty of up to \$500,000 if the scheme operator does not meet the return rate target.

c. Additional safeguards will be introduced under Section 32 to ensure that the power to impose financial penalties is exercised appropriately. NEA, in determining the amount of financial penalty, will be required to consider a list of factors such as the nature, gravity and duration of the non-compliance.

27. We have been engaging the industry closely on the details of the scheme. The beverage producers who have expressed interest to jointly support the formation of the scheme operator are seriously looking at implementation details, such as setting up return points, and the printing of the deposit mark and barcode for beverage containers. Bearing in mind the size of the task ahead, they have requested for more time to implement the scheme. They have proposed that the scheme go live from 1 April 2025, which is approximately two years from the date of passing of legislation.

a. We hear this feedback. While we want to move quickly to facilitate a shift towards a more sustainable way of doing business, we understand that the industry needs time to plan and set up a robust and effective scheme. This is to ensure smooth implementation at the ground for the multiple stakeholders of the scheme, beyond the manufacturers and importers to the F&B operators and consumers. b. Therefore, we have taken in the proposal for the scheme to go live on 1 Apr 2025. Thereafter, a grace period of 3 months will be provided for the beverage and retail industry to clear unlabelled stock, which would not carry a deposit. By 1 Jul 2025, all covered beverage products supplied must be labelled, and all suppliers must collect a deposit for each covered beverage product sold.

c. We will continue to support and engage the industry as they work to fulfil their obligations under the scheme. Prior to the commencement date, we will also work with the appointed scheme operator on education and outreach efforts to prepare consumers and other stakeholders for the scheme.

MAXIMISING RESOURCE RECOVERY OF FOOD WASTE

28. We are also building on earlier foundations laid in the RSA to close the food waste loop.

a. Food waste is a priority waste stream due to its high generation and low recycling rates.

b. When food is wasted, so are all the resources used to cultivate, process, and prepare it.

c. With growing pressures on food supply chains and resource availability, we must rethink wasteful linear models and capture value from food waste.

29. To promote resource recovery for food waste, we introduced segregation and treatment requirements in 2019.

a. The requirements are intended to apply to industrial and commercial buildings such as hotels, shopping malls and factories, which are large generators of food waste. b. In addition to facilitating the treatment or conversion of food waste into useful products such as new food products or animal feed, other benefits include reduction in disamenities such as odour and pest nuisance at the premises.

30. We are also investing in critical infrastructure to ensure sufficient food waste treatment capacity. Construction of the food waste treatment facility at Tuas Nexus is ongoing, and forms part of our efforts to support the industry in treating the segregated food waste.

FOOD WASTE REPORTING FRAMEWORK

31. To complement segregation and treatment requirements, we will be introducing a new requirement for building managers to submit food waste reports to the NEA under Section 27C.

a. This will raise awareness on the amount of food waste generated, and encourage building managers to pursue waste minimisation opportunities.

b. To ensure minimal burden on building managers, we have simplified data requirements to key information such as the overall building-level tonnages. In the long run, reducing food waste and segregating food waste for treatment could also reduce costs for businesses, such as by reducing waste disposal costs downstream and reaping value from transforming food waste into higher value products.

32. We will stagger the implementation of the food waste segregation, treatment and reporting requirements.

- a. For new buildings, the requirements will commence from 1 Jan 2024. These are buildings for which application for planning approval was submitted on or after 1 Jan 2021.
- b. For existing buildings, the requirements will commence progressively from the second half of 2025.
- c. Part 5 of the RSA, which has not yet come into force, will be repealed and re-enacted to allow for the staggered implementation.

GREATER FLEXIBILITY FOR INNOVATIVE FOOD WASTE TREATMENT METHODS

33. With more circular production practices emerging, there are increasing possibilities to transform food waste into higher value products.

- a. For example, waste bread can be used to make beverages; and
- b. Spent grains from breweries can be processed into powder to be used as ingredients for food products.

34. Therefore, our revised regulatory framework will also provide greater flexibility to enable the pursuit of these innovative food waste treatment methods.

35. Under the original Part 5, building managers of new buildings must cause segregated food waste to be treated on-site.

- a. The new section 27B will retain this requirement, but also allow segregated food waste to be treated off-site with NEA's approval.

36. Under the original Part 5, building occupiers of both new and existing buildings must use the segregation and treatment arrangements provided by their building managers.

- a. The new section 27 will allow building occupiers of both new and existing buildings to pursue food waste segregation and treatment arrangements separate from those provided by the building manager with NEA's approval.

37. In assessing whether approval will be granted, NEA will take into consideration if the proposed treatment methods process food waste into higher value products.

CONCLUSION

38. Let me conclude. At its core, the issue of waste stems from human actions and choices. Likewise, the ultimate solution to achieve zero waste and a circular economy lies, not in regulations or technologies, but with us.

- a. With the Resource Sustainability (Amendment) Bill, we are putting in place stronger measures for individuals and the private sector to reduce waste and recycle more to achieve circularity.
- b. But these measures are merely a means to an end.
- c. The goal for these initiatives must be to catalyse a change that extends beyond the boundaries of the initiatives themselves.
- d. They must cultivate new behaviours, and encourage a sustainable way of life amongst Singaporeans.

39. The amendments to the RSA will help to get everyone to pitch in for sustainability.

- a. The private sector will need to establish circular business models to properly collect and treat their beverage products at end-of-life.
- b. Building managers and occupiers will need to track the amount of food waste generated, and provide space to segregate food waste for treatment.
- c. As individuals and consumers, we will need to rinse and segregate empty beverage containers, so that we can return them for recycling and a refund of our deposit.
- d. We will also need to remember to bring our shopping bags when leaving the house.

40. But we will make this shift knowing that it is the right thing to do.

- a. That it is good for the environment, and for future generations.
- b. And so that we can take pride in the stewardship of our resources and our country, and do our part in the global fight against plastic pollution and climate change.

41.Our journey towards zero waste will not be easy, but I can say with every confidence that it will be a rewarding one.

42.Mr Speaker Sir, I beg to move.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment

[About us](#)

[Latest news](#)

[Policies](#)

[Take action](#)

[Resources](#)

[Reach us](#)



[Contact](#)

[Feedback](#) [↗](#)

© 2026 Government of Singapore, last updated 8 May 2026

[Report Vulnerability](#) [↗](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[REACH](#) [↗](#)

Made with



Built by

