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2nd Reading of the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill – Closing Speech by SMS Janil...

Speeches

2nd Reading of the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill – Closing Speech by SMS Janil Puthucheary

8 April 2026

Closing Speech by Dr Janil Puthucheary, Senior Minister of State for Sustainability and the Environment, at the 2nd Reading of the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill on 8 April 2026.

1. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank Members for their support, their questions and their comments on the Bill. All the Members who have spoken had indicated their support for the Bill and its intent to extend the Minimum Energy Performance Standards, MEPS and the Mandatory Energy Labelling Scheme, MELS to regulated goods imported by end users for own use.
2. In answering their questions and comments, I would like to begin by clarifying that only certain common appliances, such as air conditioners and refrigerators are covered under the Energy Conservation Act and this Bill. As mentioned in my opening speech, equipment, such as electric vehicles (EV) chargers, are not currently covered under the Energy Conservation Act and the National Environment Agency's (NEA's) website has a list of regulated goods.
3. The volume of Regulated Goods imported for own use is small for now especially when we consider appliances, such as air conditioners and refrigerators. The concern is that this could increase over time given the proliferation of online marketplaces, making it easier for consumers to import such regulated goods for their use. We have also noticed that some businesses are also directly importing regulated goods, such as commercial storage refrigerators, for their own use.
4. So, that is part of the need to introduce the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill to ensure a level playing field for both users and suppliers of regulated goods in Singapore, many of which are SMEs, and which are already complying with the Energy Conservation Act and for us to also improve our overall energy efficiency in Singapore.
5. Several Members have asked about the Government's plans to reduce compliance burden for end users arising from the proposed amendments and have made suggestions to streamline the registration process and user journey, such as waiving test report requirements for Regulated Goods if these Goods had been demonstrated to be MEPS-compliant by prior importers.
6. Sir, the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment and NEA have conducted public consultation regarding the proposed amendments. The stakeholders we have consulted, which range from local suppliers of regulated goods, businesses and technical experts from our institutes of higher learning have all been broadly supportive of the proposed amendments. They have also provided feedback to

reduce the compliance requirements and ensure practicality for end users, and we have incorporated their feedback into this Bill.

7. For example, we have excluded lights from the Bill because regulating them will impose a disproportionate compliance burden on end users, such as households that occasionally import a few lights. Lights are less energy intensive compared to other regulated goods and typically consume 10 times less energy than appliances, such as refrigerators, and constitute less than 6% of household energy consumption. We will continue to monitor the import of lights for own use and, if needed, explore the extension of regulations to cover such imports.
8. Sir, the new compliance requirements are not expected to be onerous.
9. Currently, local suppliers are subject to a registration fee of about \$70 per model to register their models for local supply with NEA. We have taken in the feedback to reduce the compliance burden on end users who are importing regulated goods for their own use, and they typically cannot spread the registration costs across multiple units. So, therefore, the registration and renewal fees on end users who import regulated goods for their own use will be waived.
10. Similar to local suppliers, all end users importing their regulated goods for own use will be required to register them with NEA to demonstrate the MEPS and MELS compliance, regardless of whether another importer or manufacturer has registered such goods. The reason for this is, there needs to then be an assignment of responsibility for the act of importing this particular good and that this particular report matches the good as declared. And so, it is the person who is conducting the import for own use who has to take on that responsibility. NEA can accept test reports provided by equipment manufacturers for registration of regulated goods. Suppliers and end users are not required to obtain additional test reports beyond those provided by the equipment manufacturers for registration.
11. To avoid incurring unnecessary import costs, end users are also encouraged to register their regulated good prior to import to ensure that the Good is MEPS- and MELS-compliant. As I have previously explained, to do so prior to import incurs no cost for the end user importing for their own use. We will continue to review and streamline the registration process as needed.
12. NEA will upgrade the ELS Portal for a better user experience for those applying to register their appliance. End users will be able to use Singpass, similar to how businesses currently use Corppass to access the ELS Portal and register. NEA will provide more information in due course.
13. Mr Foo Cexiang highlighted challenges for individuals and households in providing free samples of the regulated goods imported for own use, which the Director-General may require under clause 12 of the Bill for the purpose of testing or analysis. The Act does provide levers for NEA to obtain samples to, such as in the case of a business that may bulk import regulated goods for their own use. But I would like to assure Mr Foo and Members of the House that testing analysis is only conducted on regulated goods on a needs-basis and only where it is feasible to do so.
14. Mr Yip Hon Weng and Mr Muhaimin Malik asked about the Government's approach to allow the Director-General to exercise powers to impose, modify or revoke conditions after registration and the approach for appeals. I would like to assure Members that the Government would only invoke these powers only on a needs-basis and a reasonable time period will be accorded for the review, allow for rectifications and to process the appeals.
15. There will be instances where the Government would require swift rectifications to prevent the further circulation or further sale of non-compliant regulated goods. As set out in clause 7 of the Bill, the Director-General must, before imposing or modifying any condition for registration, give written notice to the holder of the registration stating the proposed condition or modification, and provide time for the holder of the registration to make written representations with regard to the

proposed modifications. The Act also expressly allows any importer or manufacturer aggrieved by the decision to file an appeal to the Minister.

16. Mr Dennis Tan asked how the Government would ensure regulated goods would remain MEPS-compliant after import, particularly those controlled by the manufacturers or third parties through software embedded within the regulated goods.
17. To balance the regulatory burden and energy efficiency outcomes, we have adopted a practical approach to apply MEPS and MELS requirements at the point of import only for own use, similar to the current regulations that apply requirements at the point of local supply. And I would emphasise this point that this is the regime that is in place currently for local suppliers and the opportunities and hypotheticals that Mr Dennis Tan had provided within the speech potentially exist today, but they do not appear to be a material problem at this point. Nevertheless, we will continue to monitor the situation and if NEA has information that approved regulated goods have low energy efficiencies during actual operation, we will investigate, conduct additional tests and audits and follow-up as necessary.
18. SMEs may import regulated goods for own use through intermediaries, such as contractors or interior designers. In such cases, it is the intermediary importing the regulated goods for subsequent supply to the SME that would be responsible for compliance.
19. Like all other end users directly import Regulated Goods for their own use, franchisees must ensure that the regulated goods that they import for their own use comply with the MEPS and MELS requirements.
20. NEA will issue press releases and circulars to inform end users and businesses about the new regulations and will also engage key stakeholders, including the food and beverage businesses through industry associations, such as the Restaurant Association of Singapore, to ensure that businesses and industries understand the new regulations and their responsibilities. NEA will also conduct checks on business establishments as needed, and conduct enforcement in response to whistleblowing reports.
21. We have assessed that there is no need to introduce controls at the point of import at this time. So, the questions around Singapore Customs, and the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, we have assessed that there is no need for these types of controls at this point. The number of regulated goods imported for own use is expected to be small. And if there were such controls as some Members have asked, they would apply to all regulated goods imported for local supply or own use. This potentially increases the administrative burden, friction and compliance costs for the importers significantly. And today, the vast majority of regulated goods brought into Singapore meant for local supply are already MEPS- and MELS-compliant. What we are trying to do is close the loophole for a small number of goods.
22. The proposed amendments will empower the Minister to make regulations to compel online platforms in Singapore to remove or rectify listings of non-compliant listings of regulated goods. This ensures that the non-compliant regulated goods, such as those that do not carry the MELS labels, are not offered to end users in Singapore. The actual operationalisation of removal of these listings will be done by the platform. It is NEA providing an enforcement instruction and it is the platform then will have to comply about how these are taken down. Consumers can verify compliance by checking for accompanying MELS labels when purchasing regulated goods through online platforms.
23. The new regulations will only apply to new regulated goods imported into Singapore, for the purposes of own use. The new regulations also exclude second-hand or used regulated goods, whether it is online or in the physical marketplace. Notwithstanding this, second-hand regulated goods imported into Singapore for resale as brand-new will be subject to the MEPS and MELS requirements. NEA will conduct surveillance and investigations to enforce compliance as required.

24. We intend to effect the new regulations from 1 July 2026 to give platform operators time to adjust to the new regulations. Since 2023, NEA has also been engaging online platforms, such as Shopee and Lazada, to remove advertisements of non-compliant goods. The online platforms engaged have also cooperated with NEA's instructions and have taken down the non-complaint listings accordingly.
25. Moving forward, we will continue to work closely with online platforms to enhance surveillance of the online space and to encourage the proactive removal of listings of non-compliant regulated goods. The platforms may implement manual or algorithmic systems at their discretion to proactively remove these listings. If NEA discovers online listings that are non-compliant, we will work with the platforms to manually remove such listings. We hope this will minimise the purchase of non-compliant regulated goods, unintended or otherwise, by individuals and households.
26. We have assessed the accompanying penalty framework to be a sufficient deterrent. Penalties will be imposed on a per-import basis, with fines of up to \$10,000 per import of non-compliant goods for own use. The MEPS-compliant equipment delivers lifecycle energy savings compared to energy inefficient equipment and this actually already intrinsically incentivises end users to import compliant equipment. So, the risk of reputational damage from the legal proceedings also discourages businesses from importing non-compliant goods. Put all of that together, we think this is likely to be quite effective.
27. A penalty framework on a per-import basis is also consistent with penalty regimes in similar legislation, including the Environmental Protection and Management Act 1999, which imposes a fine not exceeding \$10,000 for each contravening supply or import of non-compliant greenhouse gas goods, such as commercial chillers.
28. Members had asked how the Government would provide support to businesses and households to adopt more energy-efficient equipment and to build energy management capabilities. We have a suite of measures that businesses and households can tap on to strengthen their energy resilience. Companies can tap on the Energy Efficiency Grant to co-fund investments in energy-efficient equipment. The Energy Efficiency Grant already covers a wide range of regulated goods, including air conditioners, refrigerators, clothes dryers, motors and water heaters today.
29. As announced by the Senior Minister of State for Finance, the Energy Efficiency Grant base tier has been expanded to all sectors and support will be extended for another year, to 31 March 2028. This is a part of the measures to support more businesses in purchasing energy-efficient equipment through the increasingly uncertain global climate. I encourage businesses to use the Energy Efficiency Grant to adopt more energy-efficient equipment.
30. For households, the Government has provided eligible households with \$400 of Climate Vouchers in total over the last two Budgets, under the enhanced Climate Friendly Households Programme. This helps to offset the initial cost of purchase of more resource-efficient household appliances and fittings, which are expected to yield recurring energy and water savings over their lifespan. Households that have yet to use their \$400 Climate Vouchers can do so up to 31 December 2027.
31. More recently, we expanded the list of products under the enhanced Climate Friendly Households Programme to include induction stoves and five-tick clothes dryers. From 15 April 2026, households can tap on Climate Vouchers to access a wider range of resource-efficient products and achieve greater resource efficiency.
32. We do also want to invest in the development of a pipeline of energy management professionals to support energy efficiency initiatives. Mr Lee Hong Chuang suggested that the Government strengthen cooperation between industry and higher education institutions to develop more professional courses in energy efficiency and energy management. The Member would be pleased to hear that this is already happening and that the Government has programmes in place to help

businesses build a pipeline of energy management professionals to support our resource efficiency initiatives.

33. For example, in February 2026, NEA, the Singapore Institute of Technology and the Energy Efficiency Training Centre launched the new Energy Efficiency Training Facility. This supports the delivery of programmes, such as the Energy Efficiency Upskilling Programme and Singapore Certified Energy Manager Programme, to develop a pipeline of local energy management talent and to build local energy efficiency capabilities.
34. Members made several suggestions to strengthen public education and incentivise the adoption of compliant goods and were concerned about the cost impact to end users when the amendments take effect.
35. NEA maintains an online database of compliant regulated goods with product information, including estimated annual energy consumption and energy costs. Energy efficient appliances typically offer lower life-cycle costs through energy savings, even if they may have higher upfront capital costs. For example, life-cycle costs of MEPS-compliant commercial storage refrigerators are on average 30% lower than non-compliant models.
36. Mr Speaker, Sir, energy efficiency is an economic imperative that strengthens our energy resilience, that delivers cost savings for consumers and businesses and contributes to our national climate targets. The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill is a necessary step to ensure that all regulated goods in Singapore are held to the same MEPS and MELS requirements and deliver greater energy efficiency outcomes for end users.
37. I thank all Members who have spoken for their support on the Bill and with this, Mr Speaker, I seek to move.

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