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

Speeches

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

7 April 2026

Opening 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 7 April 2026.

1. Sir, on behalf of the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, I move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."
2. Sir, the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, or EC Bill in short, seeks to introduce Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) and the Mandatory Energy Labelling Scheme (MELS) to Regulated Goods that are imported by end users for their own use.
3. Sir, Singapore remains committed to meet our 2050 net zero target to secure long-term competitiveness and climate resilience. We were among just 13 countries to submit our 2035 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on time in February 2025, where we pledged to reduce our emissions to between 45 and 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2035.
4. Today, about 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to electricity consumption. Through long-term planning, Singapore has built up a resilient and diversified energy supply through our "four switches" approach to facilitate our net zero and energy transitions – solar energy, regional power grids, low-carbon alternatives and natural gas – whilst decarbonising our energy mix.
5. We are accelerating our energy transition and have achieved two gigawatt-peak of installed solar capacity in 2025. We have raised our 2030 solar deployment target to three gigawatt-peak, as announced at Budget 2026. To date, we have also awarded around 8.4 gigawatts of conditional approvals for low-carbon electricity imports.
6. Even as we pursue low-carbon alternatives, natural gas will remain Singapore's primary energy source for the foreseeable future. We will deploy advanced combined-cycle gas turbine facilities to improve generation efficiency, lower our carbon footprint and support energy resilience.
7. Energy efficiency continues to be a key enabler of our energy transition and an important way to strengthen energy security and cost competitiveness. As a small and alternative-energy disadvantaged country, Singapore imports nearly all our energy supply and we must make every joule of energy count.
8. We are making good progress. According to the International Energy Agency, Singapore's energy intensity, which is the ratio of energy consumption to economic output, improved by 39% between 2000 and 2023.

9. The Middle East conflict has further reinforced the critical importance of energy resilience amid economic uncertainty, trade frictions and geopolitical conflicts. As Deputy Prime Minister Gan highlighted in his Ministerial Statement on the Middle East Conflict earlier today, this crisis has exposed vulnerabilities in global energy supply chains and underscored the importance of a diversified and resilient power supply for our economy and our society.
10. With rising energy demands and disrupted energy supplies, we must seize opportunities to decarbonise, reduce energy usage and conserve electricity by adopting more energy efficient practices and equipment. This allows households, businesses and industries to reap cost savings and to do more with less.
11. The MEPS, the performance standards, and MELS, the energy labelling under the Energy Conservation Act (ECA) are key regulatory tools to enhance the energy efficiency of common, energy-intensive equipment, such as refrigerators, air-conditioners, motors and commercial storage refrigerators. These regulations were introduced in 2009 to regulate the local supply of such regulated goods.
12. The Minimum Energy Performance Standards, the MEPS, aim to raise the average energy efficiency of regulated goods in Singapore by removing the least energy efficient models. Under the MELS, the Mandatory Energy Labelling Scheme, local suppliers are required to affix energy labels on regulated goods, which enable customers to compare energy efficiencies and savings across models and make more informed purchasing decisions.
13. These two go together. One is a set of performance standards for the equipment, the other is a mandatory labelling scheme to make sure consumers are informed about the performance standards of the equipment.
14. To enhance energy efficiencies across sectors, regulatory coverage has progressively expanded from three types of regulated goods in 2009 to eight today. Commercial storage refrigerators and water heaters were the most recent additions in April 2025.
15. This approach has significantly increased the market share of more energy-efficient appliances. For example, the average energy efficiency of air-conditioners and refrigerators has improved by 61% and 45% respectively since 2009. This translates to annual energy savings of more than \$560 million.
16. The ECA currently regulates importers, manufacturers and suppliers that provide the local sale and supply of regulated goods, with non-compliance carrying fines of up to \$10,000. However, similar goods that are directly imported by end users, such as businesses and households, for their own use are not covered under the ECA today.
17. The current volume of such imports may be small, but this could increase over time as online marketplaces have made it increasingly easy for consumers to import such goods. Some businesses are already directly importing commercial storage refrigerators for their own use.
18. This regulatory gap raises two concerns.
19. First, this leads to the uneven application of MEPS and MELS regulations on regulated goods. Currently, only regulated goods from local suppliers face compliance requirements while those imported for own use are not covered.
20. Second, the purchase of imported regulated goods that are energy inefficient and do not comply with MEPS and MELS could lock businesses and households into higher life-cycle energy costs. Energy efficient appliances might have a higher upfront cost but typically offer lower life-cycle costs through energy savings. For example, the life-cycle costs of MEPS-compliant commercial storage refrigerators are on average 30% lower than non-compliant models. The adoption of energy inefficient equipment reduces cost savings for consumers and leads to lower abatement outcomes.

21. We have already taken some administrative steps to address this regulatory gap. Since 2023, NEA has collaborated with online platforms, like Lazada and Shopee, to voluntarily remove listings of non-compliant regulated goods. Nonetheless, given growing trends of importing regulated goods for one's own use, regulatory levers are needed to ensure such goods comply with MEPS and MELS requirements.
22. Sir, the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill aims to ensure a level application of MEPS and MELS requirements for all regulated goods in Singapore and further improve energy efficiency. Specifically, regulated goods imported for own use will be subjected to similar MEPS and MELS compliance requirements as those intended for supply in Singapore. End users would be required to ensure that regulated goods brought into Singapore for own use are registered with NEA, meet MEPS in accordance with prescribed international test standards and test conditions, and are labelled with the required energy labels under MELS.
23. The proposed regulations exclude second-hand or used regulated goods where it is impractical to assess MEPS compliance.
24. These compliance requirements are not expected to be onerous for end users. While local suppliers pay a one-time registration fee of approximately \$70 per model of regulated good, this will be waived for end users who typically cannot spread registration costs across multiple units. To demonstrate MEPS and MELS compliance, end users can rely on test reports from overseas suppliers and manufacturers. This would achieve a comparable cost of compliance between end users and local suppliers at approximately \$1 per unit of regulated good.
25. The compliance requirements will extend to all regulated goods imported for own use except regulated lamps. We will prioritise regulating the import of more energy intensive goods, such as commercial storage refrigerators for own use, compared to less energy intensive goods, such as lamps.
26. We intend to effect the enforcement regime from 1 July 2026 to deter end users from importing non-compliant regulated goods for own use and ensure compliance to the new requirements.
27. End users who import regulated goods that do not comply with MEPS and MELS requirements will face penalties of up to \$10,000 in fines per import. This is consistent with existing penalties in the ECA for the local supply of non-compliant regulated goods and the import of non-compliant greenhouse gas goods for own use in the Environmental Protection and Management Act 1999.
28. The proposed amendments to the ECA will also empower the Minister to make regulations to compel online platforms in Singapore or with a business establishment in Singapore to remove non-compliant listings. This will ensure that non-compliant products are not offered to end users in Singapore.
29. NEA will conduct systematic monitoring of online platforms and spot checks for non-compliance as needed. NEA will also conduct investigations in response to whistle-blowing reports or complaints, and leverage existing powers in the ECA to enforce compliance with the new regulations.
30. To adjust to these regulatory changes, businesses and households can continue to leverage existing Government schemes to offset higher upfront costs of energy efficient regulated goods and realise energy savings.
31. For example, small and medium-sized enterprises in the food services and manufacturing sectors that meet prescribed criteria, such as the 30% local shareholding, can tap Enterprise SG's Energy Efficiency Grant, which has been expanded to all sectors and extended for one more year to 31 March 2028 as announced by the Senior Minister of State for Finance. This Grant covers up to 70% of costs for pre-approved energy efficient regulated goods, such as three-tick refrigerators and five-tick air-conditioning units to help businesses improve energy efficiency outcomes.

32. Singaporean and Permanent Resident Housing and Development Board (HDB) Households as well as Singapore Citizen households living in private residential properties can use \$400 of Climate Vouchers under the enhanced Climate Friendly Households Programme to purchase eligible energy efficient regulated goods.
33. Sir, the EC Bill will ensure that energy efficiency remains a cornerstone of our net zero and energy transition, create a level playing field for regulated goods in Singapore and improve energy efficiency for our industries, businesses and households. With that, Sir, I seek to move.

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