

Net zero by 2050: S'pore raises climate change goals

Effort will involve electricity imports, use of hydrogen, carbon offsets: DPM Wong

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Singapore will reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said on Tuesday, while also announcing a stronger 2030 target as part of the nation's efforts to fight climate change and meet its international obligations.

The Government, which had previously said it was considering reaching net-zero emissions by 2050, has confirmed it is on track to achieve the target.

Mr Wong said the nation's greenhouse gas emissions will reach about 60 million tonnes in 2030 after peaking earlier.

"We had previously committed

to peak our emissions in 2030 at 65 million tonnes of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) equivalent," he said at the opening of Singapore International Energy Week, a major annual regional energy conference.

"We will now aim to peak our emissions earlier, and reduce our emissions to around 60 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent in 2030. This five-million tonne improvement is significant. It is equivalent to reducing our current transport emissions by two-thirds."

He also said the public sector will commit to achieving net-zero emissions around 2045, while new developments within the Jurong Lake District will reach net-zero emissions around 2045 too.

Mr Wong said achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 will be a

stretch target but a necessary one, and would involve electricity imports, solar energy, carbon offsets and other steps, such as hydrogen.

He also announced Singapore's ambitious programme to scale up low-carbon hydrogen investment and deployment, and said this will be a key part of meeting the nation's mid-century net-zero target.

He said that to enhance Singapore's energy security, "we must redouble efforts to green our energy sources because climate change is happening at an even faster pace".

"To have energy security, we will need to resolve the climate crisis too."

The revisions to Singapore's climate targets come two weeks before the start of the COP27 United Nations climate talks in Egypt.

At last year's COP26 talks in Glasgow in Scotland, nations were asked to revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets by the end of

this year. This was in recognition that collective global efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions are still not enough to limit global warming to 1.5 deg C above pre-industrial levels, a level climate scientists say should not be breached.

While Singapore is strengthening its 2030 target, its emissions will still grow before starting to fall towards the end of this decade to reach net zero by 2050. Net zero means any residual emissions from hard-to-abate sectors, such as aviation or some industrial processes, will be removed by buying carbon offsets or using technology that removes CO₂ from the atmosphere.

A National Climate Change Secretariat spokesman noted Singapore's emissions were still growing, but said: "Unlike other cities or countries that have abundant access to alternative energy sources like wind, nuclear and hydro-power, Singapore's geography and

small land area hamper our ability to harness alternative energy."

And many of Singapore's decarbonisation options this decade, such as carbon capture, utilisation and storage and electricity imports, were contingent on technological maturity and international cooperation.

Among the steps to cut Singapore's emissions are solar panels on roofs and reservoirs, setting a zero-growth policy for cars and motorcycles, and raising the carbon tax from \$5 a tonne to \$50 to \$80 a tonne by 2030.

Professor Koh Lian Pin, a Nominated MP and director of the National University of Singapore's Centre for Nature-based Climate Solutions, said: "This announcement is timely, given that Parliament will (in November) be debating the changes to the law on carbon pricing in Singapore, which is a key way to get large emitters here to reduce their emissions.

"It is also heartening to know that Singapore is interested in tapping carbon markets to achieve our climate goals. With deforestation being a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, conserving nature through high-quality carbon projects can help to turn off the tap of emissions."

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