



## **Korea to Decrease CO2 Emissions with the ‘Act on Climate Change’ 24 February 2008**

Korea’s rapid industrialization can be felt everywhere, from the coastal landscapes, which are dotted with factories, to the large cities—Seoul, Busan, and Daegu—which often have air quality so poor that skylines are swallowed in smog.

Now, the outgoing government of Korea has passed new legislation to combat this pollution and join in the international battle against climate change.

The aptly named “Act on Climate Change” will establish an emissions trading market, raise the bar for renewable energy, assist in reducing industrial, home, and vehicle emissions, and increase carbon capture.

### **Carbon trading**

By 2009, Korea plans to have set up a voluntary emissions trading agency and a carbon trading market.

On the one hand, though participation will not be mandatory, companies will be rewarded for reducing their energy demands. On the other hand, the government says it will supply extra incentive for businesses to moderate their greenhouse gases with a carbon tax.

A national target for emissions reductions should be announced sometime later in the year, before the carbon trading scheme comes into effect. A tentative goal for reduction of industrial CO2 pollution is 3.2% of 2005 levels by 2012 (1.8 million tonnes).

### **Renewable energy**

Currently, just 2.3% of Korea’s energy is generated renewably. The Act on Climate Change will increase that figure to 5% by 2012 and 9% by 2030. As part of this initiative Korea is also considering expanding its nuclear power programme.

Biodeisel—mostly from palm oil—will also be mixed into fuel in increased quantities, from 0.5% in 2007 to 3% in 2012. An initial increase of up to 5% was proposed, but not adopted. Palm biodeisel has its own environmental dark side, but a new regulatory body has been established in Malaysia to help ensure its sustainability, as discussed here.

Hey, it’s no Germany, but Korea is at least on the right track.

### **Residential greenhouse gas emissions**

So many Koreans live in large apartment towers—often owned by one of the countries mega-corporations, like Hyundai—that the government has focused on these buildings as a good place to reduce residential CO2 pollution. The goal: a 2.5 million tonne reduction by 2012 for large-scale residencies and industrial complexes.

**Vehicle greenhouse gas emissions**

South Korea has such a phenomenal transportation infrastructure of buses, trains, and cheap taxis that it's a wonder anyone drives at all.

To moderate vehicle emissions, new vehicle regulations will be put in place and less polluting vehicles promoted. In this way, as much as 600,000 additional tonnes of CO2 emissions will be prevented.

7,920 hybrid cars, 1,750 fuel cell vehicles, and 13,080 natural gas buses and cleaning vehicles will have hit the roadways by 2012.

**Carbon sink**

Lastly, Korea is set to bring out the big guns: Korean pride in the country's natural beauty.

Through forestation efforts, Korea hopes to absorb as much as 12 million tonnes of CO2. Trees will be planted on open land, in cities, and around schools.

In addition to all this, there are also plans to establish a foundation for more environmentally friendly agriculture and to recover methane generated from landfills.

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Source: [www.vecc-sepa.org.cn](http://www.vecc-sepa.org.cn)