



## Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill 2022 will be pivotal in reducing India's fossil fuel-based energy consumption

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There has been a paradigm shift in how electricity is produced, distributed and even consumed in our country. We have been gradually moving towards a more digitalized, decentralised and most importantly, decarbonised energy system.

The foundation of these changes was laid by the **Electricity Act 2003**. The objective of the act was to introduce competition, protect consumers' interests and provide power for all. It also mandated metering and introduced strict punishments for the theft of electricity. The act was also in a way, a transformation for the sector. It encouraged competition, delicensed power generation and gave consumers the freedom to source power. It replaced the aging Electricity Act 1910, Electricity Supply Act 1948 and the Electricity Regulatory Commission Act 1998.

Over the years, we have seen several amendments in the act, once in 2003 and then again in 2007. These amendments were done to stimulate commercial growth in the sector and create increased synergies between the centre and the states. Another landmark moment for the sector is the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill 2022. The new amendments focuses on promotion of use of non fossil source of energy and seeks to usher a transformation by reducing the nation's dependence on fossil fuels. It will also be indispensable in helping India meet its commitments towards climate change and will become an important tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in India.

The Bill will markedly reduce India's fossil fuel based energy consumption by defining the minimum share of energy from non fossil sources to be consumed by various establishments. It will provide legal framework for a domestic carbon market with the objective of incentivizing actions for emission reduction leading to increased investment in clean energy and energy efficiency areas, by private sectors. The Bill also has provisions for ramping up the adoption of Renewable Energy as an alternative to fossil fuels. Furthermore, the Bill also seeks to regulate energy consumption by equipments, appliances, buildings, industries and vehicles/vessels.

Another way the Bill seeks to reshape the nation's decarbonization is by not only amending the Energy Conservation Code for buildings to provide for an 'Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code' but also bringing vehicles and vessels under its purview. The bill also envisages inclusion of Residential Buildings under its ambit to encourage sustainable habitat. The Act empowers the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) to adjudge penalties under the Act and adds that SERCs may also make regulations for discharging their functions. To make the enforcement more fruitful penalties provisions are revised and are differentiated based on implementation sectors. Further keeping onus to manufacturers and importers thus relieving retailers, dealers and consumers from undue harassment.

India as a nation, has walked the talk on issues of Energy Transition and climate goals. By achieving 40 % capacity from non-fossil sources in November 2021, we achieved one of the NDC targets committed in COP-21, nine years ahead of the target year i.e. 2030. The other NDC commitment was reducing the emission intensity of the economy by 33-35 percent of GDP by 2030 from the 2005 level. By 2019-20, the reduction in emission intensity is already estimated to be 29 % of the GDP. Again we shall achieve this NDC target years ahead of 2030 as well. That's why India has raised ambitions to reduce its emissions in COP26. According to the updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), we now aim to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP by 45 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels, and source 50 percent of electricity from non-fossil sources along with reduction of carbon emission by 1 additional billion tonnes. The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill 2022 will play a central role in reducing the nation's carbon intensity and pave the way for a cleaner energy ecosystem in the nation.





## **Last mile sustainability: All hands-on deck approach is needed to combat climate change**

**Dr. Hanif Qureshi**

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Clean energy is at the center of a global push towards sustainability. We can already witness the adverse effects of climate change across the globe and thus it clearly calls for impactful and targeted mitigation measures. India has been way ahead of the curve, in terms of its SDGs and renewable energy targets. At COP26, India outlined its clear goals for reduction of carbon intensity and achieving net zero, which underpins the government's sustained focus on sustainable development. We have also been moving steadily towards the goal of 24X7 access to clean and affordable energy for all the citizens.

India is building a robust energy sector, with the understanding that it is perhaps the first requisite for any country that is looking to prosper economically and balance the rope of ecological preservation. We are transforming the nation's energy sector by pioneering the implementation of both energy efficiency and renewable power. However, for us to achieve our climate goals, we need to adopt an all-hands-on deck approach. Industry leaders, policymakers and implementing agencies must all put their heads together for addressing some of the top priorities in facilitating cooperation, sharing knowledge and best practice experiences to help scale up implementation of sustainability initiatives at scale.

In Haryana, we have been working diligently to promote policies and programmes necessary for popularising the applications of various new and renewable energy technologies. We are creating awareness about the uses of solar, wind, biogas and biomass-based technologies among the public. We are also focusing on the proliferation of energy conservation measures for efficient use of energy. We have introduced a myriad of progressive policies and regulations in recent months, which have propelled our clean energy efforts in the state. We have also introduced a draft solar policy and solar parks policy and revision of regulations, with the aim to stimulate new investments and projects in the state's renewable energy sector, especially solar.

As part of the PM KUSUM scheme, Haryana was given a target of 15,000 off-grid solar pumps of 3-10 HP capacity, which we achieved with great enthusiasm and dedication. We are also promoting e-mobility for reducing the state's dependence on fossil fuels and mitigating climate change. HAREDA has also devised and is implementing several schemes to utilise the surplus biomass available in the state. The state government is also promoting renewables in Haryana by facilitating the installation of solar power plants through the RESCO (Renewable Energy Service Company) mode. As of now, projects of 6.5 MW capacity have been installed in RESCO mode and projects of about 2 MW are under installation. Compressed biogas plants in the state under the Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India is also being given a thrust, with the aim to reduce the state's dependence on imported gas and use of disposable paddy straw.

These are just some of the intervention that are being undertaken, in a bid to combat climate change. A collaborative and sustained approach to clean energy interventions, spearheaded by government agencies is the need of the hour to help India achieve its climate goals.