



Green Ambition – The Reform Party Green Manifesto 2020

Build Back Better, Fairer...and GREENER

Singapore is facing the worst economic crisis since independence. Many Singaporeans have lost their jobs or their businesses are in peril and there will be more economic damage to follow. There has never been a better time to build Green policies into the Singapore model. The Reform Party is fighting this election under the slogan “Build Back Better, Fairer.” What we mean by this is that when we come to build back Singapore, to restart our economy, we have a unique opportunity to embrace change and build back a version of Singapore better than the old one. This ambition perfectly encompasses building back Greener. Building back Greener is more than an ambition it is an urgent necessity.

Many Singaporeans will say that we are a small nation so there is not much we can do compared to China or that the harm we cause is minimal compared to larger nations. Yet, we have never let our size or our lack of natural resources get in the way of striving for and achieving excellence in other areas. The damage we do to the climate has a direct impact on other nations such as the sand we take away from coastlines for national construction work which in turn causes rising sea levels in those nations. Many of the migrant workers we rely on are from countries most affected by our damaging activity.

The Reform Party believes we should become an exemplar as a green city state. A model to other nations. We can do this by putting pressure on the government to enact the legal changes required to meet an emissions target and other measures;

- By creating ambitious targets for government buildings and ministries.
- By implementing changes and targets for Industry and energy generation.
- By implementing changes in our homes and the way our homes are built.
- By implementing changes at work and by pressuring our employers to adopt green measures.
- By implementing changes in our personal activities.
- By changing the way we travel.
- By investment in re-training and research.
- By protecting our natural spaces and shoreline.

The Paris Agreement

The government of Singapore has signed up to the Paris Agreement but like most such agreements it signs up to, it pays only lip service to the targets. Singapore's current targets are woefully inadequate.

Being a signatory is not sufficient.

The Reform Party policy is to aim to reduce our absolute emissions to reach as close as possible net zero in 2050 with an ambitious target of 40% by 2030.

Institutional Framework

The Reform Party proposes a: Response to Climate Change Act: A legal framework to coordinate the actions required to reach our stated aim of net zero by 2050.

This Act would coordinate a mandate for ambitious emission targets across all government ministries, agencies and government-linked corporations (GLCs) such that ministries, agencies and GLCs are put to a higher standard and lead the way in adopting green measures.

The Act would require Town Councils and Residents Associations to adopt green targets and ambitions.

The Act would grant extra powers to MEWR and NCCS to enable action.

The Act would see a substantial increase in public spending to support the mandate as well as funding for research to aid in reaching the targets.

The Act would see a substantial rise in public spending to create training and employment for those retrenched as a result of the climate change measures so that they can pivot to new greener employment opportunities.

The Built Environment

The constant building, tearing down and rebuilding of infrastructures and buildings is not only a ruse to keep adding inputs to the GDP but has a significant impact on Singapore's carbon emissions. The government of Singapore owns most of the land in Singapore and in particular the land underneath the HDB housing blocks where almost 90% of our citizens live. It must therefore lead the way in implementing change.

The Reform Party proposes that we look at incentives in the form of tax breaks, expert training and guidance for the purpose of adapting and retro-fitting existing buildings rather than demolition.

The HFCs used in some air-conditioning units are very damaging to the environment, particularly when being demolished. The Reform Party wants to see a phasing out of HFCs in favour of refrigerants with lower global warming potential and better servicing and repairing of existing HFC units.

We propose a household green grant for HDB residents wishing to adopt new greener models and maintenance for existing ones.

All new builds must conform to a strict new code in relation to embodied carbon of materials which will fall under the purview of the proposed: Response to Climate Change Act.

Waste

Many Singaporeans believe that adopting green measures means not using plastic straws. A greater benefit would be achieved by reducing consumption overall. We propose education and guidance to encourage reduction and a new relationship to rampant consumerism.

We propose the introduction of composting into the waste cycle via the addition of community composting sites.

Energy

Singapore has a limited amount of land and few natural resources and so to meet our ambitious target The Reform Party proposes we invest significantly in research on renewables particularly in the area of reliability of battery storage. We must act fast to redress the woeful balance of 95% of electricity from natural gas with only 1% from renewables.

Transport

Singapore is the perfect city state to adopt green transport methods and yet we seem reliant on personal car ownership.

The Reform Party proposes that we begin expanding the adoption of point-to-point electric car share clubs with a commensurate expansion in the provision of charge stations.

We further propose that COE be reduced to 5% of its current rate for all car owners who exchange a petrol or diesel engine vehicle for an electric one and 10% for those who buy an electric vehicle without exchanging.

In order to shift reliance on personal vehicles we propose a tandem change to the charging metric for city buses. All registered Singapore school children from kindergarten to age 16 to be issued with passes for free travel by bus up to age 16. All Singaporeans over the age of 65 to be given similar passes along with passes for those with special needs and their carers and those with other conditions that make it difficult to drive.

We propose that streets be redesigned to provide for safe family oriented cycle routes and a network of cycle highways for commuters alongside provision of free parking for cycles.

Carbon pricing

We are currently working on policy for new measures and implementation of carbon pricing.

Finance

We propose that our Sovereign Wealth Funds, Temasek and GIC make public the companies in which they invest each year and commit to ceasing investments in fossil fuel and other damaging industries, and change the weighting of their portfolios to a majority investment in low carbon industry by 2025.