

China spends big to ensure clean winter heating

Chinese central and local governments are committed to huge spending in the coming three years to ensure clean winter heating in 12 cities in northern China.

Those cities, including Shijiazhuang, Taiyuan and Tianjin, are in a pilot program for winter heating with clean energy sources, as they have been frequented by smog in winter partly due to over-reliance on coal.

Local finances will contribute about 69.7 billion yuan (11 billion U.S. dollars) to complete clean heating renovation in the next three years, Liu Wei, deputy minister of finance, said at a Friday meeting on the issue.

Financial institutions, companies and other non-government sources will spend more than 200 billion yuan, Liu said.

The pilot program was unveiled in May, with central finance to provide between 500 million yuan to 1 billion yuan to each city.

The program came after this year's government work report said that China will address pollution caused by coal, with measures including clean winter heating in the north and replacing coal with electricity and natural gas in more than 3 million households.

At the meeting, pilot cities were asked to seek new ways of capital input, encourage more private funds into the pilots, and coordinate the prices for electricity, natural gas and heating.