

New emission caps for power plants approved

A spokesperson for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said today (June 10) that the Ninth Technical Memorandum for Allocation of Emission Allowances in Respect of Specified Licences (the Ninth TM) has been approved by the Legislative Council on June 9. This will result in further emission reductions from the power plants of the two power companies (The Hongkong Electric Company, Limited and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited).

The Ninth TM caps the annual emission allowances of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and respirable suspended particulates (RSPs) from the power generation sector from 2026 and onwards at 2 852 tonnes, 11 144 tonnes and 367 tonnes, respectively. As compared with the emission allowances set under the Eighth TM, the Ninth TM will tighten the emissions of SO₂, NO_x and RSPs by 9 per cent, 10 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively. This will help continuously improve the air quality in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta region.

In order to meet the new emission allowances, the two power companies will complete the construction of three new gas-fired generating units in or before 2024, such that the proportion of local gas generation will be around 57 per cent of the total fuel mix for electricity generation in 2024. The two power companies will also continue to acquire low-emission coal for electricity generation and maintain the performance of emission control devices so as to reduce emissions from coal-fired generating units.

In accordance with the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, the emission allowances for power plants stipulated in the Ninth TM will come into effect on January 1, 2026. The EPD will conduct a further review by 2023 to ensure timely revision of the emission allowances.