



26 APR, 2024

## ECoS will be empowered to regulate ocean heat energy in Sabah

Borneo Post (KK), Malaysia



Page 1 of 2

# ECoS will be empowered to regulate ocean heat energy in Sabah

**KOTA KINABALU:** The State Assembly passed the Energy Commission (Amendment) (no.2) Bill 2024 on Thursday to include the term "ocean thermal" in the definition of "renewable energy" as one of the energies to be comprehensively regulated by the Sabah Energy Commission (ECoS).

Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister, Datuk Abidin Madingkir, in tabling the Bill, said that on March 6, 2024, the Cabinet meeting approved two matters, namely the proposal for the drafting of the Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) Bill 2024 as a major initiative under the Sabah Blue Economy Plan and the need to amend existing legislation to include Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion as a renewable energy source.

"In line with this decision, several series of meetings were held between the Sabah State Attorney General's Department and the Sabah Energy Commission (ECoS) to draft the Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Bill 2024, along with the amendments necessary to the Sabah Energy Commission Enactment 2023 by including the term "ocean heat" in the definition of "renewable energy" as one of the energies to be comprehensively regulated by the Sabah Energy Commission (ECoS)," explained Abidin.

"As Sabahans, we are extremely grateful because the ocean in the state of Sabah has a potential renewable energy source that has been identified through research and studies conducted by the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia - Ocean Thermal Energy Centre (UTMOTEC) for more than 10 years. As previously explained, research findings have found that Ocean Thermal Energy in Sabah has the potential to generate up to 20,000 megawatts of electricity, which can further produce various high-value products such as green hydrogen, which is a highly demanded energy source by several developed countries at present," he added.

Abidin said that with this resource, it will become a catalyst for the overall economic growth of Sabah and attract investors from around the world to invest in the development of this ocean thermal energy and subsequently create many job opportunities

for local Sabahans.

Furthermore, this OTEC technology will also benefit rural residents, especially on local islands, by providing basic infrastructure such as electricity and water supply, he said.

"Therefore, effective planning and implementation are crucial to support this aspiration. Hence, considering the technical capabilities and experience in energy regulation, the responsibility for supervising the development potential of OTEC in Sabah will be undertaken by the Sabah Energy Commission, which is also in line with its establishment to oversee the energy sector in Sabah, including this renewable energy source," he said. Abidin said that he was confident ECoS, equipped with experienced technical personnel, can ensure the smooth and efficient implementation of this ocean heat energy conversion development.

Furthermore, the orderly and controlled development of OTEC in terms of governance by a trusted and integrated regulatory body will instill confidence in local and foreign investors to participate in the development of this ocean heat energy technology led in Sabah, he said.

"As we are well aware, the maritime borders of Sabah under the North Borneo Order of Council (Alteration and Boundaries) 1950 extend up to 200 nautical miles from the state's coastline, and I believe that the implementation of this matter falls within the jurisdiction of the state.

"Therefore, the Sabah Energy Commission (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2024 shall be presented today with the aim of inserting the term 'ocean heat' in the definition of 'renewable energy' so that the functions and powers of the Sabah Energy Commission related to renewable energy include matters regarding ocean heat energy conversion in line with the proposed legislation," he added.

Abidin mentioned that the proposed amendment is to the interpretation of "renewable energy" in Section 2 of the Sabah Energy Commission Enactment 2023. The amendment is as stated in the Sabah Energy Commission (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2024, he said.