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Sabah gears up for Green Hydrogen through Ocean Thermal Energy

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KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah State Legislative Assembly approved the new Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) Enactment 2024 and Energy Commission of Sabah Enactment (Amendment No. 2) 2024 on Thursday.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Haji Hajiji Haji Noor said this will pave the way for the development of OTEC as a new source of renewable energy and as one of the main initiatives under the Blue Economy.

"The Enactment will enable the state through the Energy Commission of Sabah (ECoS) to regulate the activities of exploration, construction and operation of OTEC facilities.

"The OTEC technology aims to harness the temperature difference between warm surface waters and cold ocean depths to generate electricity in an environmentally friendly manner," he added.

The Chief Minister said Sabah boasts vast ocean resources with the right characteristics, making it a prime territory for exploring OTEC.

"Research findings have indicated that certain areas in the state have the potential to generate up to 20,000MW of electric power which could be used to produce green hydrogen, a highly sought-after energy source to achieve net zero carbon emissions goals.

"This industry will create jobs and attract foreign direct investments to Sabah," he said.

In addition, the Chief Minister said secondary products such as mariculture products and drinking water will further generate economic development in the local surrounding areas.

"By positioning ourselves as the first in the ASEAN region for OTEC development, the State can also attract skilled professionals and foster innovation for the development of Sabah," he added.

Datuk Ir Abdul Nasser Bin Abdul Wahid, Chief Executive Officer of ECoS stressed that the development of this new

technology aligns with the Sabah Energy Roadmap and Master Plan 2040 (SE-RAMP 2040) launched last September to increase renewable energy mix and identify new energy sources and technologies for the long term.

"ECoS, as the regulatory body, welcomes proposals in this regard to conduct exploration and feasibility studies to obtain the best development for Sabah," he added.

The Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Development Act 2024 received support from assemblymen at the State Assembly on Thursday.

When debating the bill, Sindumin assemblyman Datuk Dr Yusof Yacob emphasised the significant benefits of the OTEC bill for Sabah's future.

"The OTEC bill has significant benefits for the state's future, stimulating the economy with investor attraction and creating new jobs. This sustainable energy is a necessity," he told the August House.

Yusof also commented on Section 3 of the bill concerning licensing, where he suggested that licenses be issued to Sabah-owned companies and government-linked companies (GLCs) by ECoS.

He highlighted the importance of Sabah retaining control over its energy resources.

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Chief Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Haji Hajiji Haji Noor tabling the Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Bill at the State Assembly on Thursday.