

Headline	Look at renewable energy seriously		
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# Look at renewable energy seriously

**TENAGA** Nasional Bhd (TNB) is looking at increasing energy tariffs by 14% next year due to the government's rationalisation of oil prices. In other words, the government no longer wants to bear subsidies to independent power producers (IPPs) and TNB itself. With this in mind, it would be a good time to seriously look at renewable energy.

TNB has been accused of hindering the growth of renewable energy. It is said that the Feed in Tariff (FIT) programme introduced in 2010 could have been increased from 1% to 2% if not for the national power company's intervention. Instead, we will see an increase of only 0.5%. While an increment of 14% plus another 1% for the FIT would burden most consumers, the bright side would be an increased interest in residential renewable energy schemes.

If TNB insists on paying lower prices for energy generated from renewable sources such as solar, biomass and biogas compared to that generated from gas, fuel and coal, what message is it sending to the green energy players wishing to establish in Malaysia? And come 2017, another source of renewable energy per se would be introduced from Sungai Buloh to Kajang with the establishment of the 51km Line

1 of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project.

Energy can also be generated from rail lines when a train slows down. This technology is expected to be used for the MRT Line 1 as well as its future expansion to be announced soon. While the amount of energy generated remains in question, should it not also be fed into the grid to ease the burden on the public and also generate a form of return on investment for the rail line? With the availability of such technology today, it should be used on all existing rail networks to lessen dependence on the IPPs and use instead sources which are more sustainable in nature. For one, the LRT expansion project and its existing lines are, according to sources, burning the energy generated due to its existing design. Why not upgrade it with this technology to feed back into the grid?

While the people and industries are currently suffering from a thirst for power, many are already looking at generating some electricity through renewable means which would reduce the dependence on the main power grid. Other than the

corporate sector, the government is also looking to reduce cost and dependency on power from the main grid.

The developing Pantai Waste Treatment Plant 2 under the Department of Irrigation and Drainage of the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water will

be using solar panels as roofing of its parking lot, which would contribute 20% of the energy used for its systems.

Although Malaysia is in the lead in foreign direct investment in terms of companies producing photovoltaic cells required for solar energy generation, we do not have policies to encourage the use of solar panels in the residential sector. Such policies would give the Sustainable Energy Development Authority of Malaysia more power to decide on the development of biomass, biogas, small hydro and solar power generation.

While this may help lower the costs for Malaysians who can afford such alternatives, it remains to be seen if the rest of the nation would just have to deal with the increasing cost of living with no alternative in sight. **FocusM**

