

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Hong Kong, 8 October 2021**—Independent policy think tank, Civic Exchange, welcomes today’s publication of the Hong Kong Climate Action Plan 2050. The HKSAR government’s medium-term decarbonisation targets comprehensively address carbon emissions at source and aim to mitigate temperature rise to protect ourselves, our economy and future generations.

We wish to highlight commitments by government to:

- Increase renewable energy supply to 7.5-10% by 2035 through maximising domestic supply of waste-to-energy, solar, and offshore wind energy. This represents a significant increase in ambition compared to the 2017 Climate Action Plan 2030+, which aimed for 3-4% by 2030.
- Consider regional cooperation through offshore projects and joint ventures towards the large-scale development of zero-carbon energy such as nuclear energy and green hydrogen.
- Lead the way towards the achievement of highly energy efficient buildings through ambitious target setting, technological innovations, regulatory development, and data transparency.
- Push forward urban transport decarbonisation measures such as testing the technological and commercial viability of electric and new energy public transport and commercial vehicles, as well as congestion charging.
- Create interdepartmental Working Groups on the application of hydrogen energy in Hong Kong.
- Develop strategies to reduce municipal waste disposal at landfills and increase recycling services for food waste, waste plastics, and waste paper.
- Focus on building adaptation and resilience to combat sea-level rise, temperature rise and extreme weather events, while safeguarding our economy, society, and urban environment.
- Encourage the development of Hong Kong into a regional centre for green finance, a carbon trading centre integrated with the Greater Bay Area, and an innovation and technology hub.

However, While the interim target of reducing Hong Kong’s carbon emissions by 50% before 2035 as compared to 2005 levels advances the carbon neutrality goal, it does not align with the IPCC AR6 target of reducing global emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030.<sup>1</sup> Hong Kong must follow scientific recommendations and aim for quicker and absolute emissions reductions by preponing its 50% reduction target to 2030. Waiting for an additional five years will have irreversible consequences for environmental and human health, as well as our economy. The HK2050 is Now reports offer further recommendations for Hong Kong to achieve its carbon neutrality target.

**A. Power**

We appreciate that the HKSAR government has taken Hong Kong 2050 is Now’s recommendations into consideration, particularly those from our latest research report, “Powering a Carbon-Free Hong Kong: Pathways Towards a Net-Zero Emissions Power System for Hong Kong”. Given that many cities have aligned themselves with more ambitious decarbonisation targets and hence will be competing for the same zero-carbon energy sources, we need to weigh options for zero-carbon energy starting now to

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<sup>1</sup> Hong Kong’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2005 and 2010 were 41,300 kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e and 40,800 kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e, respectively, as cited in Hong Kong’s greenhouse gas emissions inventory:

<https://www.climateready.gov.hk/files/pdf/Greenhouse%20Gas%20Emissions%20in%20Hong%20Kong%20by%20Sector.pdf>.

guarantee Hong Kong's energy security. We should also remain open-minded about importing power, particularly from joint venture investments into energy resources elsewhere if it is cost-effective and reliable.

### **B. Mobility**

We welcome Government's promotion of zero-carbon transportation in Hong Kong; however, we await more specific details regarding the zero-emissions mobility roadmap for heavy duty vehicles. A clear policy direction is crucial for the industry to conduct proper trials, planning, and investments. Government should coordinate infrastructure development to support technologies that promote new energy public transport and work with industry to develop appropriate funding models for a transition from current operations to future zero emission operations.

### **C. Building Energy Efficiency**

We appreciate Government establishing an absolute building energy efficiency target, which includes reducing electricity consumption of commercial buildings and residential buildings by 30-40% and 20-30%, respectively, from 2015 levels by 2050. However, some listed companies in Hong Kong have already committed to targets beyond those. We suggest mandating energy saving improvements of at least 30% by 2030 and strive for net-zero carbon buildings by 2050, which would align with science.

### **D. Nature-based Solutions**

We acknowledge Government's incorporation of adaptation and resilience into the Climate Action Plan. We welcome efforts thus far to investigate climate risks and strengthen the city's infrastructure against potential adverse impacts. We recognise nature-based solutions as a "no regrets" approach to increase carbon sinks and build resilience, offering some of the best and most cost-effective options among responses to climate change.

Civic Exchange believes that achieving a low-carbon transformation will bring an abundance of economic and social development opportunities. The Government, private sector, NGOs, and the public must work together to reach carbon neutrality targets and contribute to a sustainable, liveable Hong Kong.

For details about Civic Exchange's response to the Policy Address on 6 October 2021, please visit this [link](#).

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