SUSTAINABLE INSIGHTS

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CHINA TO MAKE POLLUTION DATA PUBLIC

Pollution data of 15,000 enterprises will be made public. Polluters may face pressure from NGOs and pro-environmental groups.

New rules will require 15,000 enterprises, including some of the biggest state-owned agencies, to make public in real time details about their air pollution, waste water and heavy-metals discharges.

The data, previously accessible only by the government, will allow citizens to make better-informed decisions, to lobby factories and officials for change, and to keep an eye on the implementation of environmental laws.

The new rule will allow NGOs, such as the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, to analyze and publicize the data as they wish. This is expected to put pressure on polluters, who used to evade regulations and fines due to loopholes in the central-planning system, to cut their emissions to levels set by regulators.

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'KEYSTONE'S XL CLIMATE IMPACT IS MINIMAL': US GOVERNMENT STUDY

The study finds that Keystone XL will not intensify US carbon pollution levels. Approval now depends on US's energy needs, diplomatic relations and EPA's review.

TransCanada Corp.'s Canada-US oil pipeline project cleared a major hurdle when the US State Department's final environmental review revealed that the project is unlikely to significantly increase carbon emissions because oil sands in Alberta will be developed anyway.

The study finds that Keystone XLmeets President Obama's project approval condition of not exacerbating the US's carbon pollution levels.

In Sustainable Insights Edition 17 and Edition 18, we disclosed how Canadian oil is facing barriers to entry to the US market over carbon emissions. The American Petroleum Institute stated that this final review put to rest any credible concerns about the pipeline's potential negative impact on the environment.

The President's decision (which may be disclosed as soon as July) will now be influenced by the EPA's review of the study, which is expected over the next 90 days.

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SPAIN TO SET RETURN CAP ON RENEWABLE PLANTS TO REDUCE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES

The 7.4% cap is a bid to reduce the government's debt burden. Wind energy set to lose the most.

Spain's plan to cap the return earned by renewable energy plants at 7.4% is an attempt to curb subsidies that have been borne by the country's utilities, via the government, resulting in the erosion of credit strength for both.

The proposed rate, pending government approval, will allow plants to earn a rate of return pegged to their cost of investment. The Asociacion Empresarial Eolica criticized the plan because approximately 37% of installed wind turbines will lose premium payments, while the rest will experience a 50% reduction in earnings, putting 22,959MWs of Spain's wind energy capacity at risk.

Photovoltaic rooftop and stand-alone installations, on the other hand, gained a higher relative percentage of subsidies (30% of the EUR8.6bn paid in 2012).

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