

Energy needs among S'poreans' top worries

Greatest impact on country's future comes from higher energy prices, energy shortage or water shortage: Shell poll

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Four out of five Singapore residents are as concerned about future energy needs as with the cost of living, employment and housing affordability in Singapore, according to a survey conducted by Shell Eastern Petroleum.

The Future Energy Survey, which polled 400 residents, also revealed that at least seven out of 10 Singapore respondents believe higher energy prices (79 per cent), energy shortages (75 per cent) and water shortages (72 per cent) have the greatest impact on Singapore's future. These statistics underline the United Nations' and Shell Scenarios' estimate that the world will require 40 to 50 per cent more energy, water and food to keep up with rising demand and increased population growth by 2030.

"It is encouraging that many respondents in Singapore view future energy needs as high priority and are increasingly aware of the inter-dependence of food-water-energy," chairman of Shell Companies in Singapore Lee Tzu Yang said.

Mr Lee added that innovation and technology will have to be used to meet these serious needs.

Survey respondents are also in favour of a mix of energy sources to help meet future energy demand.

Solar energy was the most preferred future energy source with 86 per cent of respondents picking that option. This was followed by natural gas (52 per cent), wind power (47 per cent) and hydro energy (42 per cent).

Senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies Gillian Koh said: "It is probably more practical to consider the importation of natural gas, as our government has now taken steps to do and also to wait till solar cells are able to get around the hurdle of our enormous cloud cover and become much cheaper than they currently are."

A large majority (92 per cent) of respondents have indicated the importance of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and are already taking measures, such as saving electricity and recycling, to do so.

In addition, 42 per cent of respondents said that they support greater collaboration between industry, government and community in order to solve energy challenges.

Respondents below the age of 40 (196 respondents) believe that economic incentives for clean energy (31 per cent) and innovation (16 per cent) are the most important factors in solving energy challenges, while 20 per cent of older respondents above 40 years (204 respondents) think that effective government policy remains the most important factor.