
Environmental Policy

Trends in 4Q 2024

Jan. 2025

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Environmental Policy Trends – 4Q 2024 (Summary)

[Major policy] Transition to a carbon neutral circular economy

(Pre-announcement of legislation of expansion of electronic products subject to recycling) The Ministry of Environment pre-announced the legislation of amended subordinate laws of the Act on Resource Circulation of Electrical and Electronic Equipments and Vehicles (for 40 days starting September 25). Under the amended laws, items subject to the Eco-Assurance System* such as the Extended Producer Responsibility (ERP) scheme are extended to all small and medium sized electrics and electronic products such as wireless earphones, hand-held fans, etc.**

* Recycling shall be promoted by requiring collection and recycling and restriction of hazardous substances when manufacturing, importing and sales.

** Currently applied to 50 types of mid-sized and large electronic appliances such as washing machines, refrigerators, microwave ovens, and dishwashers.

- The full text can be accessed at opinion.lawmaking.go.kr, and the amendments shall be implemented starting 2026 after collecting the opinions of stakeholders and going through a grace period for successful application of the scheme.

< New items added (tentative) >

Product category		Items
1. Temperature exchanger	Appliances such as refrigerants	Clothing drier, electric ice box, clothing care appliances
	Large-sized appliances	Electric ondol bed, recliners
2. Display appliances		Digital picture frame, e-book readers, video door phone, automatic teller machine, karaoke machine
3. Solar panel		-
4. General electric and electronic	Mobile phone device	-
	Telecommunication	Smart watch/band, beam projectors (portable)

products	and office devices	
	Other general electric and electronic products	Sauna machines for home use, e-cigarettes, bluetooth earphones, wine openers, hot water mats, portable fans, blackbox, sitz bath, electric oven, electric hair styler, drones, electric food steamer, LED nail drier, electric scooters, toothbrush sanitizers, electric fermenters, hair steamers, bluetooth speakers, electric bicycles, electric diffusers, scalp care devices, electric blankets, document laminators, electrical instruments, auto sensor trash cans, skin care devices, electronic scales, power tools for home use, electronic hair clippers, electronic smoke eliminators, digital door locks, electronic toothbrush, electronic calculator, automatic animal feed supplier, aquarium air pump, telephones, mikes, electronic turntables, lint remover, digital camera

(Standards for operating the mandatory bio gas production scheme*) For the stable implementation of the bio gas production scheme starting 2025, the government prepared five public notices stipulating detailed implementation standards (e.g., public notice on bio gas production goal rate) and made a pre-announcement of administration (Nov. 20) (11.20)

* Bio gas: Gas (e.g., methane, CH₄) generated as organic waste resource (e.g., sewage sludge, human and livestock manure, food waste) that is disintegrated by microbes in an air-less state

* Applicable to: local governments (persons in charge of treatment of organic waste resource), livestock waste discharging businesses with 25,000 pigs or more, operators of livestock waste treatment facilities with treatment capacity of 200 m³/day or more receiving support from the State or local government, mandatory producers of bio gas in the public and private sectors such as dischargers of food waste of 1,000 tons or more per year

- The five public notices are as follows and the full text is uploaded on the Ministry of Economy website (me.go.kr).

- ① Public notice on the method of report and conformity assessment
- ② Public notice on the registration of bio gas production volume and trade
- ③ Public notice on the reduction and exemption standards on imposition of fines
- ④ Public notice on the evaluation of operation of bio gas production facilities
- ⑤ Public notice on bio gas production rate goal for 2025* ⇒ Bio gas production rate goal for public mandatory producers: 50%*

* The production rate goal is set every five years by law (Article 4 and attached Table 1 of the Enforcement Decree), and the annual production rate goal is prescribed by public notice.

Attached Table 1 of the Enforcement Decree		2025- 2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Target rate	Public	50%	60%	70%	80%	80%
	Private	10%	50%	60%	70%	80%

[Major policy] Measures against highly dense ultrafine dust and climate change (2nd plan against ultrafine dust (2025-2029) and 6th ultrafine dust seasonal management scheme) The government held a meeting of the special committee on measures against ultrafine dust presided by the prime minister and finalized and announced the following plans (Nov. 27): ① the 2nd comprehensive plan to manage ultrafine dust with the objective of achieving national annual average ultrafine dust density of $13\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ by the year 2029; and ② the 6th ultrafine dust seasonal management scheme (Dec. 2024-Mar. 2025) in order to prepare for the high-density ultrafine dust period in winter and spring.

- The 2nd comprehensive plan is comprised of 83 programs in five fields such as: reduction of emission in major domestic emission sources, management of pollution sources, protection of health, strengthening of base for science policy, and international cooperation. If the programs proceed as planned, the national annual average density of

ultrafine dust shall be improved to 13 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, which is in the median range among OECD member countries.

- In accordance with the 6th seasonal management of ultrafine dust, vehicles with emission gas grade of 5 are restricted in the Seoul metropolitan area and six special cities and metropolitan cities. Also, starting from 2025, close inspection on nitrous oxide emission by diesel vehicles shall be expanded from the Seoul metropolitan area to every air quality management areas (attached Table 1 of the Enforcement Decree of the Special Act on Air Quality Improvement for Atmospheric Control Area).
- A summary of the 2nd comprehensive plan to manage ultrafine dust and the major achievements of the 1st comprehensive plan, and a summary of the 6th ultrafine seasonal management can be found at the Environmental Policy Trends for 4Q 2024, and the entire plan is posted at the Ministry of Environment website.

(Mid-term plan for management of in-door air quality amid climate change) In consideration of the fact that people are spending more time indoors due to extreme weather and climate change, the Ministry of Environment and related ministries recognized the importance of indoor air quality and the connection* between GHG and indoor air quality and announced the 5th basic plan for indoor air quality management (2025-2029)** (Nov. 25).

- The plan is summarized in the Environmental Policy Trends for 4Q 2024, and the full text can be accessed at the Ministry of Environment website.

** (Climate change → Management of indoor air quality) As people are spending more time indoors, humidity increases and raises the risk of microbial infection (Air quality deterioration → GHG emission) GHG is emitted when operating air control and ventilation facilities

** Joint governmental legal plan for proposing a mid-to-long term goal for indoor air quality management: Implemented by the Ministry of Environment (Indoor Air Quality Control Act), Ministry of Education (School Health Act), Ministry of Employment (Occupational Safety and Health Act)

[Major policy] Strengthening of safety measures in everyday life

(Pan-ministerial efforts to respond to flow of illegal and hazardous goods) To respond to the inflow and outflow of illegal goods through illegal direct purchase, various ministries* including the Korea Customs Service and the Ministry of Environment signed an agreement for mutual cooperation through sharing of hazard information and dispatch of experts** (Sep. 26).

- The Ministry of Environment purchased 558 products supplied by overseas online distributors (e.g., Ali Express, Temu) from April this year and tested their safeness. As a result, 69 products were found to violate Korea's safety standards (Sep. 19).*

* [Measures taken after the announcement] As soon as violation of domestic safety standards was confirmed, information on the products were registered on the websites ecolife.me.go.kr and consumer.go.kr. and overseas online distributors were asked to stop the sale of the products. Also, a request was made to the Korea Customs Service to stop the products from entering Korea pursuant to Article 237 of the Customs Act.

(Acceleration of transition of gasoline motorcycles used by small businesses for delivery to electric motorcycles) The Ministry of Environment, the Seoul metropolitan government and other administrative agencies and related businesses (eight organizations and businesses*) signed an agreement to expand the use of electric motorcycles by small businesses for eco-friendly delivery (Nov. 7).

* Ministry of Environment, Seoul city government, Dongdaemun-gu, LG Energy Solution, Korea Federation of Micro Enterprise, Daedong Mobility, KR Motors

- With the signing of the agreement, Seoul city government plans to expand the use of electric motorcycles and raise the portion of electric motorcycles relative to gasoline motorcycles by the year 2026 (As of Sep. 2024, the portion stands at 4%).

(Regulatory improvement) Improvement of regulations for the promotion of circular use of wastes

(Pre-announcement of legislation of subordinate laws of the Wastes Control Act)

In order to promote the use of waste resources through exemption of coal pumice* from waste regulations and other measures and to impose administrative dispositions more reasonably, the Ministry of Environment made a pre-announcement of legislation of partially amended subordinate laws of the Construction Waste Recycling Promotion Act (Sep. 26-Nov.6).

- The full text can be accessed at opinion.lawmaking.go.kr. The amended laws shall be enforced starting January 1 next year after reflecting the opinions of stakeholders.

(Industrial support) Response to nature-related financial disclosure (ESG) and support for international certification

(Education for businesses on nature-related financial disclosure) In line with the global market's movement to adopt nature-related financial disclosure disclosing information on evaluations on a business's impact and reliability on biodiversity, etc. to investors, the Ministry of Environment supported corporate educations on nature-related financial disclosure for staff members handling the issue **(1st session: Nov. 26-28, 2nd session: Dec. 2-4/ 50 persons per session)

* The EU European Sustainable Reporting Standards (ESRS) imposed nature-related financial resources disclosure responsibilities to some companies (Jul. 2023), and announced the standards for climate disclosure of the International Sustainable Standards Board (ISSB) under the IFRS (IFRS S2) (June 2023) and also announced a plan to include biodiversity in the disclosure standards within two years (Jan. 2024).

** Education content: Corporate strategy for nature-related financial disclosure, understanding nature-related impact and reliability and hands-on training, understanding guidelines for preparing nature-related information disclosure and future application methods

(Completion of national water equipment function certification center) The Ministry of Environment completed the construction of the national water equipment function certification center, a national testing organization for water-related equipment such as pumps, valves, and flow meters (Nov. 26, within the national water industry cluster in Dalseong-gun, Daegu) to reduce the burden of small and medium-sized water-related companies.

- Equipment tested: Pumps (~1,000 mm), valves (~600 mm)/ Calibration items: flow meter (~600 mm)

⇒ For more information, refer to the Environmental Policy Trends for Foreign Investors – 4Q 2024

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