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Firms 'wasting' billions on energy (<http://www.scmp.com/article/986562/firms-wasting-billions-energy>) [1]

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A clear energy-conservation policy should be drawn up for the city's commercial sector, following the release of a new index indicating the sector wasted up to 40 per cent more energy and HK\$7 billion in the past two decades, a green group says.

The Hong Kong Energy Index, commissioned by WWF Hong Kong, shows the sector's energy use for a set of activities grew from a base of 1 in 1990 to 1.4 in 2008.

The 40 per cent jump is the increase in the amount of energy - including electricity, gas and oil - used for activities such as office operation in the sector between 1990 and 2008, the period covered by the index. The wastage could mean that up to HK\$7 billion was unnecessarily spent over the period, the group said.

'With this index, we are now able to tell whether and to what extent we have wasted energy, instead of just blaming population or economic growth for higher energy consumption,' Dr William Yu Yuen-ping, head of the group's climate programme, said.

Hong Kong as a whole consumed 243,347 terajoules of energy in 2008, or 36 per cent more energy than in 1990, according to government data. But Yu said there were questions about whether this increase was genuinely needed.

He said the index showed for the first time that extravagant use of equipment might have cancelled out efforts to cut energy use.

While Yu acknowledged that higher living standards might have driven up consumption, wasteful power use - such as shopping mall spotlights and excessive air conditioning - could also be on the rise.

Associate Professor William Chung Siu-wai from City University's environmental policy research unit, which compiled the index for WWF, said the modelling method used to generate the index was widely adopted internationally.

Yu said the government should come up with appropriate policies to help and encourage the commercial sector to save energy.

'We have been discussing energy conservation for many years and we expect that the incoming chief executive will introduce effective demand-side management, targets and policies, measures and legislation to lead Hong Kong to become a genuine low-carbon city,' he said.

26%

The increase - between 1990 and 2008 - in the amount of energy wasted by the city as a whole,

according to WWF Hong Kong

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