

CABINET A STUDY GUIDE - THE ENVIRONMENT

Topic 1: Should Singapore be completely self-sufficient in water production?

Introduction

Water security is a critical issue for nations worldwide, especially due to climate change, which is expected to exacerbate water scarcity hazards (Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, 2023). Despite Singapore being a small nation state that lacks natural resources, Singapore has grown to be internationally recognised as a model city for integrated water management (Public Utilities Board, 2024). In Singapore, there are four national taps: water from local water catchments like reservoirs, imported water from Malaysia based on the second Water Agreement (signed in 1962, and will expire in 2061) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024), NEWater and finally, desalinated water. This diversified water supply strategy ensures not just sufficient water for Singaporeans, but also a robust and sustainable supply of water for future generations of Singaporeans (Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, 2024). However, while the demand for water in Singapore is expected to almost double by 2065 (UN-water, 2023), Singapore's existing resources only cater to 103m³ of renewable freshwater resources per inhabitant per year. (UN-water, 2023). While complete self-sufficiency might help reduce reliance on external sources and benefit Singapore during times of crisis, the economic, political, and environmental challenges also have to be considered. Considering the critical role of the water agreement in sustaining stable bilateral relations between Singapore and Malaysia, as well as the potential economic implications of Singapore maintaining its own water supply, representatives must assess the feasibility and effectiveness of Singapore achieving self-sufficiency in water production, especially since the water agreement between Singapore and Malaysia is set to expire in 2061.

Historical Overview

Singapore's journey to be self-sufficient in water has come a long way from the 1800s. Singapore, as an island city surrounded by sea water and a tropical climate, had accessible water sources. Due to Singapore's rising popularity as a trading port, the demand for water was constantly increasing. In order to cater to these demands, many reservoirs were constructed, with the first being MacRitchie Reservoir, previously known as the Impounding Reservoir, in 1868 (Conservation Portal, n.d.). However, even with the enlargement of the Impounding Reservoir, this reservoir was unable to meet the demands for freshwater, especially during prolonged periods of dry weather. As a result, The Municipal Council decided on obtaining water from Gunong Pulai, Malaysia, which allowed the water to be delivered to Singapore naturally due to the difference in gradient of the land, saving on water transportation costs and making it the most economically feasible. The first water agreement was then signed on 5 December 1927, allowing Singapore to lease 2,100 acres of land in Gunong Pulai at an annual fee of 30 cent per acre for the purpose of supplying raw water to the island, and Singapore was not charged for the water (Seng & National Library, Singapore, 2018).

Over time, and as technology became more advanced, NEWater and desalinated water were also introduced as part of Singapore's water supply strategy after much experimentation that dated back to 1966. Apart from these four taps, there are other water strategies that helped to ensure the success of the four taps. For example, there was the 2007 Reservoir Integration Scheme established by the Public Utilities Board (PUB), which used a system of pipelines and pumps to transfer excess water from one reservoir to another, optimising their capacity (ibid).

Considering these solutions need to be effective in the long run, there has been constant efforts to innovate and be more efficient. For example, there was a collaboration with Evoqua Water

Technologies in 2015 to trial a new desalination method. By adopting electro-deionisation, which uses an electric field to extract dissolved salts from seawater and leaving behind freshwater, Singapore was able to explore more cost-efficient and energy saving methods to generate clean drinking water (ibid).

Timeline of Singapore's efforts to be self-sufficient in water production

Year	Details
1961	An agreement signed between the City Council of Singapore and the Government of the State of Johor which gave Singapore full and exclusive right and liberty to impound and use all the water from the Gunong Pulai Catchment, Tebrau River and Scudai River until 2011 (Chew, n.d.).
1963	The PUB was established to manage the water supply, water catchment areas, the treatment of used water and coastal protection in Singapore (Foo et al., 2023).
1972	The first Water Master Plan was developed, outlining strategies for a diversified water supply (National Library Board Singapore, n.d.).
1977	The Singapore River clean-up initiative commenced, significantly improving the quality of local water bodies (LCNA:Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore & National Library Board Singapore, n.d.).

2000	The Singapore Water Reclamation Study (NEWater Study) began, assessing the viability of reclaimed water for potable use. The study ended in 2002, with the conclusion that NEWater was safe for potable use, but recommended indirect potable use (IPU), which is blending NEWater with raw reservoir water before undergoing conventional water treatment (National Library Board Singapore, n.d.).
2005	The first desalination plant (SingSpring) began operations, contributing to the diversification of Singapore's water sources (PUB, n.d.).

Current Situation

Consumption of water in Singapore

Singapore uses about 663.6 million cubic meters (m³) of water each year, with the country's daily water consumption amounting to 1.62 million m³ (Lourdes, 2024). In households, showering, flushing, washing of utensils in the kitchen, and doing the laundry comprised about 80 percent of a home's total water usage (Begum, 2024) . Under the Singapore Green Plan 2030, the goal is to reduce household consumption to 0.13 m³ per person per day. This is to improve water security and ensure a sustainable water supply for the future, even in the face of potential threats (Yusof, 2021). Many Singapore residents actively help to achieve this goal themselves by adopting simple daily habits like reusing water and making a more conscious effort to purchase water-efficient appliances to help save water. Additionally, to help residents who are using less efficient water appliances and fittings save water, PUB has implemented measures such as providing these households with a free PUB Water Saver Pack upon request. This pack contains thimbles for showerheads, kitchen and bathroom sink taps, flush saver cistern bags, and leak detection tablets

for the flushing cistern. All these tools can significantly reduce water usage by installing them on these households' water appliances. (Begum, 2024)

In the industrial sector, current projections state that the demand for water will increase from the current 55 percent of Singapore's total water consumption to more than 60 percent due to upcoming projects like water fabrication, electronics and biomedical industries (Tan, 2023). Hence, it is equally important for companies to make intentional efforts to reduce water usage. Especially for water-intensive industries, PUB has mandated recycling requirements for new projects from 1 January 2024 onwards. This will include projects in the wafer fabrication, electronics and biomedical industries, which account for about 17 percent of non-domestic water demand. Moreover, to help businesses with managing the financial costs, companies looking to implement these water recycling projects can apply for financial support from PUB's Water Efficiency Fund and the Industrial Water Solutions Demonstration Fund until the end of 2025 (Tan, 2023).

Case for complete self-sufficiency in water production

Reducing reliance on Malaysia

With Malaysia's plan to attract data centre investments, Malaysia is projected to require more water to support these water intensive projects. This may make ensuring an adequate supply of water in industrialised states like Johor a challenge. This strain may arise not only due to the diversion of funds towards data centre investments, but also the operations of data centres themselves which require up to approximately 4,000 m³ of water per day; the equivalent of daily water usage for a city of 10,000 people. Given the looming expiry of the 1961 water agreement with Malaysia, along with growing geopolitical tensions that strain bilateral ties, many Singaporeans remain anxious about the stability of their nation's water supply. Therefore, if

Singapore is able to become self-sufficient in water production, we will be less dependent on external sources whose future reliability is uncertain.

Boost Singapore's reputation as a global leader in water innovation

Singapore sees the value in growing her water sector by investing in new water technologies and innovation to not only meet its national objectives of self-sufficiency, but also solidifying its position as a global leader in water innovation. According to a report done by Zion Market Research, the global water market size was valued at USD 302.81 Billion in 2022 and is predicted to reach USD 430.89 billion by the end of 2030 (Zion Market Research, 2022). Hence, Singapore aims to seize opportunities to grow in the global water sector by moving beyond research and development (R&D) activities that only meet national objectives, and building on its strengths in water technologies to develop solutions for the world in targeted areas (National Archives of Singapore, 2016). By pursuing water innovation, Singapore can further solidify its position as a hub for R&D in water technology innovation for years to come. The Singapore Water and Wastewater Treatment Market Size is anticipated to exceed USD 2.1 Billion by 2033, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.14% from 2023 to 2033 (Spherical Insights, 2024). This growth boosts Singapore's status as a global hydrohub and also its global economic influence.

Case against complete self-sufficiency in water production

Dampening Bilateral relations with Malaysia

Over the past few decades, Malaysia and Singapore have committed to maintaining their strong ties in many areas such as political-security cooperation, economic cooperation, environmental cooperation and sustainable development. During the recent 11th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders Retreat, the Leaders emphasised their commitments in ensuring that the obligations under the 1962 Johor River Water Agreement are fulfilled, commending each other on their continued efforts

and discussing ways to enhance each other's water system (Joint Statement by PM Lawrence Wong and PM Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the 11th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat, 2025). The water agreement is an important discussion topic under environmental cooperation and sustainable development of the two countries as it allows for an appreciation of each other's partnership and consideration of both nation's shared interests (ibid). As such, once the agreement expires, there will be a loss of a potential issue for the two countries to discuss and collaborate on.

Climate Change and Rainfall Variability

With the growing unpredictability of the world's climate, Singapore is expected to experience an increase in average temperature, sea level rise and an increase in the intensity of weather variability, notably droughts and intense rainfall leading to flash floods (Gordon, 2014). All these will have implications on Singapore's local water supply. Even if improvements in infrastructure are made to ensure that our water system can continue to function and produce sufficient water during extreme climate changes, the question is if we should continue to have diversified sources of water beyond our borders.

Environmental consequences

The environmental impacts of the desalination method also needs to be addressed. Desalination is an energy-intensive process, with the energy consumption accounting for approximately 25% to 40% of the overall cost of water (Lantz et al., 2019). Additionally, reverse osmosis requires high pressure, leading to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. With the constant intake and discharge of seawater that are part of these processes, it may disrupt the surrounding marine ecosystem. Together with the introduction of concentrated brine, which contains hazardous pretreatment chemicals and heavy metal, this may lead to a loss of habitat and coastal pollution

(ibid). Should Singapore move towards complete self-sufficiency in terms of increasing its carbon footprint in generating fresh water, the possible impacts on the environment need to be addressed and assessed.

Current solutions working towards self-sufficiency in water production

Government initiatives

The Singapore government plays an essential role in rolling out other national initiatives to ensure that Singapore's water supply is not disrupted. In the last few decades, a robust water system of our four national taps has been carefully set up and maintained, together with many other successful initiatives. PUB raised its funding for water recycling projects under the Water Efficiency Fund (WEF) to a maximum of \$5 million, up from \$1 million in order to encourage businesses to undertake bigger and more ambitious water conservation projects, effective as of 1 July 2023 (PUB, 2023). Previously in 2016, Marina Bay Sands received grant money from PUB to install infrastructure that helped with the collection and recycling of water from 4000 air-conditioning units from across its three hotel towers. This condensate water recovery solution saves an average of 700 m³ of water per day (Begum, 2024c).

Non-governmental and Private organisation initiatives

Aside from the government, non-governmental organisations and private corporations play a key role in educating the public on the importance of water sustainability, and contributing to the structural aspects of moving towards self-sufficient water production. In 2020, Keppel Infrastructure created the world's first large scale dual-mode water desalination plant, which switches between desalinating seawater and treating reservoir water while integrating it into an urban setting with minimal environmental and social impacts. This project also won the title of

Desalination Plant of the Year at the Global Water Awards 2021 (Aecom, n.d.). Additionally, Waterways Watch Society (WWS), with the aim of spreading awareness about keeping Singapore's waterways and reservoirs clean to ensure our drinking water is not at risk, hosts programs for volunteers to collect trash washed up in the waters. They do so in engaging manners such as kayaking or paddle-boating to fish out litter from the waters (Benevity, 2024). This program helped to remove 20 to 30 kilograms of trash per session (ibid), greatly improving the cleanliness of reservoirs, which are essential for the production of water in Singapore and contributes to Singapore's efforts of becoming self-sufficient in water production.

Projection into the Future

By 2061, when the current agreement for imported water from Malaysia expires, Singapore aims to achieve near-total self-sufficiency in its water supply. Projections indicate that up to 85% of its freshwater will come from NEWater and desalination, with the remaining from local catchments (Singapore - IWA Network, 2020).

Johor's situation

Due to the growing economy, water usage in Johor is projected to expand. Additionally, since 2015, Johor's river water levels reached historic lows due to drought, pollution and large water discharge to combat salinity. These environmental issues may strain Malaysia's water export commitment to Singapore, and hence they may not be likely to renew the 2061 agreement (PwC et al., 2018). Given these trends, the ability of Johor to continue to provide water to Singapore is called into question.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while Singapore has made significant progress in achieving water self-sufficiency, becoming completely self-sufficient in water production will still require more time and resources. Today, Singapore has developed a diversified and resilient water supply system that includes local catchment, desalination, NEWater, and imported water. While this combination ensures that Singapore can meet its current water needs, today, this is also premised on Singapore importing water from Malaysia.

Given the existing situation, achieving self-sufficiency would provide Singapore with enhanced national water security and resilience against geopolitical or supply disruptions. It also ensures the sustainability of Singapore's water production system in the long term, regardless of external factors like climate change or regional droughts. Lastly, it allows Singapore to maintain its position as a global leader in water innovation (RSK Group, 2023), boosting collaborations and enhancing ties with countries around the globe.

However, full self-sufficiency requires continued investment in infrastructure and technological advancements in order to keep up with our fast paced world, particularly in desalination and water recycling. It also requires careful management of costs, as desalinated water can be expensive to produce compared to other sources. As such, a balance needs to be drawn to ensure that Singapore is able to improve its self-sufficiency while using its resources efficiently .

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. To what extent should Singapore be completely self-sufficient with regards to water production?
2. Are the tradeoffs in ensuring complete self-sufficiency in water production worth it for Singapore?

3. What measures can be taken to ensure water security if Singapore becomes self-sufficient in water production?

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Topic 2: Should Singapore implement taxes on single-use packaging?

Introduction

The implementation of The Singapore Green Plan 2030 demonstrates how Singapore is increasingly prioritising sustainable development, with one key target of the initiative being to reduce the waste sent to landfills by 30% in 2030 (Singapore Green Plan 2030, n.d.). As Singapore aims to achieve environmental sustainability, the question of whether Singapore should impose taxes on single-use packaging has gained popularity recently. This is because single-use packaging, which is predominantly made out of plastic, is a major cause of pollution in water bodies and landfills, and a severe danger to marine life. Due to a worldwide trend towards reducing plastic consumption (Plastic Free July: How 20 Countries Are Taking Action, n.d.), many countries have implemented various measures, including taxes and fees for single-use packaging (Nicasio, 2022). People who support these regulations believe that they can motivate businesses and households to cut down on waste and instead use eco-friendly options. Critics, however, argue that such policies can create extra costs for businesses and households which completely outweigh any potential benefits. As Singapore is actively positioning itself as an advocate in environment management, the arguments about the introduction of a single-use plastic tax warrant an assessment of the potential use of the policy to address developmental, ecological and social issues.

Case study of Spain

In Spain, a law has been implemented where single-use plastic packaging is taxed 0.45 Euros for every kilogram of non-recycled plastic used, with the purpose of preventing the generation of non-

reusable plastic packaging waste and to promote the recycling of plastic waste (Applus, n.d.). However, medical and hygiene-related plastics, which are essential to public health, are exempted from this (Almack, 2025). Monetary penalties for the late payment of tax, the late filing of tax returns, and the breaching of specific obligations have also been implemented (Cuervo, 2023). With this tax in place, many businesses have to take extra steps to distinguish between recyclables and non-recyclables, and this additional process is estimated to have an impact of 690 million Euros on companies (Orozco, 2023).

Timeline of Developments

Singapore's efforts in moving towards eliminating single-use packaging

Year	Details
2001	The National Recycling Programme (NRP) was rolled out by The National Environment Agency (NEA). Under the NRP, recycling bins and recycling collection services were implemented at all Housing Development Board (HDB) estates. Private landed properties and private apartments were also given the choice to opt into this public waste collection scheme (National Recycling Programme, n.d.).
2019	Launch of the Say YES to Waste Less movement by NEA, where retailers, food and beverage (F&B) outlets, supermarkets, hotels, grassroots organisations, schools, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) partner NEA in an effort to encourage more environmentally friendly actions. This

	<p>includes prompting customers to opt out of disposable cutlery for their online orders, providing incentives to customers who bring their reusables, and actively encouraging employees to reduce their use of disposables (Past Events, n.d.).</p>
<p>2021</p>	<p>Packaging Partnership Programme (PPP), launched through a collaboration of NEA with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) was introduced to enable the exchange of best practices in sustainable packaging waste management (Overview of the Packaging Partnership Programme (PPP) Packaging Partnership Program, n.d.). There is a special logo (see image below) provided for products with reduced packaging, providing recognition and supporting companies that put in the extra effort to minimise packaging waste and empowering consumers who wish to make a conscious choice (Singapore Packaging Agreement and Packaging Partnership Programme, n.d.).</p> <div> </div> <p>www.nea.gov.sg/SPA</p> <p>(About Logo for Products With Reduced Packaging (LPRP) Packaging Partnership Program, n.d.-b)</p>
<p>2023</p>	<p>The Plastic Bag Charge, launched by NEA, was officially implemented at supermarkets across Singapore. The charge was set at a minimum of five</p>

	cents per bag for all plastic bags provided at checkout. The minimum charge was kept low to reduce the initial impact on shoppers, while at the same time encouraging them to take less disposable carrier bags (Begum, 2024d).
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Case for the implementation of taxes on single-use packaging

Reduces plastic pollution

Single-use packaging contributes significantly to the growing waste problem, especially plastic waste. Much of it ends up in landfills, drains, or our oceans, posing severe risks to wildlife and ecosystems. Moreover, globally our landfills are being used up at a faster rate due to plastic waste (Packaging Waste 101: The Problem - Supply Chain Solutions Center, 2019). Given the harms of single-use packaging, a tax on single-use packaging would incentivise businesses to switch to more sustainable packaging such as recyclable plastic. This can be seen from the drop in United Kingdom's plastic packaging imports and the production of plastic from 3,451 tonnes down to 2,967 tonnes (McGregor, 2024). By targeting single-use packaging specifically, this will help to mitigate the environmental damage and promote a cleaner, greener Singapore.

Boost Government revenue

The tax revenue earned from implementing a taxation on single-use packaging may be used for other beneficial purposes. The Singapore government may use the tax revenue to further support other sustainable business practices. Given that small and medium enterprises, with limited resources, are often more likely to struggle to adopt more expensive sustainable options (Engao, 2024), such additional support from the state would certainly be beneficial. This additional tax revenue can be used to support these businesses by allowing them to transit to more sustainable

methods/processes and find better alternatives to unsustainable practices such as the use of single-use packaging. Tax revenue could also be used in other areas of development which would benefit the citizens. For example, in Europe, the tax revenue earned has been used to address environmental issues such as water pollution (Constantin et al., 2022). This would overall improve the standard of living of the citizens and boost economic growth.

Case against the implementation of taxes on single-use packaging

May potentially disproportionately affect the working class

Should there be taxes for single-use packaging, there is a high chance that businesses will pass down the increase in production costs to the consumer by increasing the price of the items sold. While this may seem as a small and inconsequential increase for higher-income households, this increase may be a large financial burden for middle and lower-income households, especially since single-use plastic packaging is found in many essential items (Plastics Industry Association, Better Industry. Better World., 2023). Apart from consumers, small businesses may also suffer because of the tax. Unlike large corporations, small businesses do not have the financial means and resources to instantly switch to more sustainable production methods (McClelland, 2023), especially if there is a lack of support and funding from the government. For example, after a packaging tax to fund recycling was imposed in the UK, companies estimated that the tax would cost them 100% of their profits (Wood, 2024), showing the detrimental effect of taxes on businesses.

Unintended environmental consequences

Many corporations, in order to avoid the tax, will find alternatives for single-use plastic such as turning to paper or glass. However, instead of bringing positive environmental impacts, these other materials also generate waste, have their own set of environmental impacts and are not necessarily better for the environment (Yeap, 2024). For example, many plant-based plastics,

despite sounding more environmentally friendly, are molecularly identical to normal plastics and last just as long in the environment (Baker, 2023). This would then limit the effectiveness of the tax, and instead create new problems that require more regulations and taxes to tackle these unintended consequences.

Current Situation

Plastic is the fourth highest type of waste generated in Singapore, with one million tonnes of plastic waste generated in 2022. Of this amount, only six percent of plastic waste is recycled (Yeap, 2024). While there is a growing number of more environmentally conscious individuals who are keen to adopt practices like reducing the use of plastics and single-use disposables in their everyday lives, the majority of Singaporeans still do not have the habit of adopting sustainable practices despite the continuous support given by the Government (Ang, 2022). Instead, due to the rising cost of living in Singapore, it is common to see citizens simply complaining about having to fork out an additional \$0.80 for biodegradable containers (ibid). In addition, there are worries from the public that producers may be taking advantage of these new green policies and charge higher prices for environmentally friendly packaging in order to boost their profits (ibid). Another reason for the lack of effort from citizens is the need for lifestyle changes that will bring about additional inconvenience. After years of being provided with plastic bags or containers when they were out shopping, many consumers find it troublesome to bring their own eco-friendly bags and having to wash and dry reusable containers. This is because the majority of the consumers prioritise their own convenience over the environmental impacts of their actions (ibid).

While there are success stories of how a tax will significantly decrease the usage of single-use plastic bags, such as the example of Portugal, which saw a 74% reduction in plastic bag usage following the imposition of a plastic bag tax, not many countries are implementing this additional

tax yet. One reason for there being no tax for single-use plastics in Singapore up till now is because taxing single-use plastics may also lead to a switch to disposables made from other materials such as paper or degradable plastics, which also produce waste, have their own set of environmental impacts, and may not necessarily be better for the environment (Reducing Our Use of Disposables, n.d.). As a result, instead of advocating a switch to degradable materials through taxation, Singapore's current approach is to reduce the use of disposables regardless of the material type, and promote the use of reusables.

Nevertheless, there is still value to consider if implementing taxes on single-use packaging will help to complement Singapore's approach to promote the use of reusables, especially since Singapore has limited space to build more landfills (McGregor, 2024).

Current Solutions

In recent years, the Government and other environmental NGOs groups have implemented initiatives to incentivise people to cut down on single-use plastics.

Government initiatives

A minimum five cent charge was imposed by the Singapore government for every disposable plastic bag in major supermarkets, effective from July 2023 (ibid). In a NEA survey, it was found that 90% of customers bring their own bags to do grocery shopping in 2024, an increase from the previous percentage of 61% of consumers who brought their own bags before the disposable carrier bag charge was made mandatory at larger supermarket operators. The increase of 30% showed the effectiveness of this charge (Lee, 2024). With this charge in place, many consumers have chosen to not use plastic bags when their food is being packed, even at shops that are not affected by the five cent charge (ibid).

Non-governmental organisation initiatives

In 2017, non-profit organisation Zero Waste SG started the BYO (Bring-Your-Own) Singapore movement. The campaign featured retailers, businesses and organisations encouraging the public to bring their own reusable bags, refuse the use of single-use disposables, and included incentives, such as a fifty cent discount on orders (BYO Singapore – Bring Your Own Bag, Bottle or Container. Reduce Plastic Disposables and Get Rewards., n.d.). However, a study done on hot drink sales in twelve university and business sites in the United Kingdom have shown that surcharges produce a larger impact by increasing the use of reusable cups by 3.4%, while a discount made no impact (Poortinga & Whitaker, 2018). This may be due to consumers being more sensitive to losses instead of gains, and therefore are less incentivised to do good to get discounts. Hence, the effectiveness of this initiative in the context of Singapore may be limited.

Projection into Future

As Semakau Landfill will be filled by 2035 (Semakau Landfill 20th Anniversary, n.d.), Singapore is seeking to reduce the production of waste, especially that of single-use plastics and disposables. This is also in a bid to reduce emissions, maximise resource efficiency and save on disposal costs. Singapore will most likely maintain her mandatory minimum five cent tax on single-use disposable carrier bags for every major supermarket as it has shown great success, with supermarket operators giving out significantly fewer disposable carrier bags (Yeap, 2024b). However, Isabella Huang-Loh, the chairperson of the Singapore Environment Council said that the current five cent surcharge was not sufficient to make an impact on Singapore's growing waste problem (Huang-Loh, 2023). Moving forward, Singapore will most likely implement more initiatives to reduce the use of single-use plastic. (National Recycling Programme, n.d.). One such initiative would be the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Scheme Expansion launched by NEA. Singapore plans to expand its EPR scheme to cover a wider range of products, including packaging materials like plastics, to push for more sustainable packaging production and waste management systems (Tan, 2024).

Conclusion

To summarise, Singapore has made significant progress in dealing with the challenges associated with single-use plastic packaging, especially through initiatives such as the SG Clean campaign, having more private organisations collaborating with the NEA, and the EPR framework. However, with the successes of plastic tax in countries like France or Norway, there are discussions on whether Singapore's measures have a limited impact compared to imposing a direct tax. Singapore's slow but steady approach has been proven to be well-received as shown by the positive feedback towards the plastic bag fee trial (Tan, 2019). However, the dire need to reduce waste, mostly due to the fact that the Semakau Landfill will be decommissioned in 2035, indicates that enforced regulations rather than the current voluntary compliance and awareness raising initiatives may be required in the future. Whether Singapore will adopt a more aggressive tax regime in the future, or whether the government will simply continue tweaking its existing policies in order to harmonise its environmental objectives with the economic and consumer behavioural ones is an issue that this Cabinet should address in detail.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. How can Singapore improve the existing measures to address her plastic waste disposal problem?
2. Representatives are to evaluate if Singapore should implement such taxes and if so, how can Singapore deal with the implications of a tax and its potential impacts on certain segments of society
3. How effective will a single-use plastic tax be in Singapore, and will the unintended consequences outweigh the possible benefits?

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