Introduction of the *Ecological and Environmental Code of the People's Republic of China*

The *Ecological and Environmental Code of the People's Republic of China* was adopted at the Fourth Session of the 14th National People's Congress on March 12, 2026. Consisting of five parts, several subparts and supplementary provisions, it systematically covers all areas of ecological and environmental protection, aiming to establish the strictest legal system for ecological and environmental governance and advance green, low-carbon development and ecological civilization. It is the first Code on ecology and environment in China, and it will be effective from August 15, 2026.

Part I: General Provisions – Foundational Framework for Ecological Protection

It defines the legislative purposes as protecting the ecological environment, safeguarding public health and maintaining ecological security. It applies to pollution prevention and control, ecological protection, green and low-carbon development and other activities within the territory and jurisdictional sea areas of the People's Republic of China, and also governs acts outside China that cause environmental pollution to China.

Part II: Pollution Prevention and Control – Full-Dimensional Management of All Types of Pollution

It establishes the principle of **targeted, science-based and law-based pollution control**, and implements core systems including pollution discharge permits, total volume control of key pollutants, and the "three simultaneous" rule for pollution prevention facilities. It strictly prohibits pollution discharge through concealed pipes, data falsification or other means to evade supervision.

Part III: Ecological Protection – Systematic Conservation of Ecosystems

- **Ecosystem protection**: Adhere to the integrated protection and restoration of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and deserts; focus on protecting ecosystems including forests, grasslands, wetlands, oceans, islands, rivers, lakes and deserts; and establish a protected natural areas system.
- **Sustainable use of natural resources**: Strictly protect cultivated land and permanent basic farmland; regulate the development and utilization of mineral, water, fishery and other resources; implement

rigid constraints on water resources, fishing bans and restrictions, forest harvesting permits and other systems; and promote paid use of resources.

- **Species protection and prevention of invasive alien species**: Protect wild flora and fauna and their habitats; establish species lists and protection systems; severely crack down on illegal hunting, trading and other acts; build a system of "source control, monitoring and early warning, and comprehensive governance" for invasive alien species; and regulate approval for introduction and quarantine supervision.
- **Key areas and ecological restoration**: Strengthen ecological protection in key river basins and regions such as the Yangtze River, Yellow River and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau; establish coordination mechanisms and special plans; advance soil and water conservation and desertification control projects; and regulate the planning, implementation, acceptance and post-project management of ecological restoration projects.

Part IV: Green and Low-Carbon Development – Driving Economic and Social Transformation

- **Green and low-carbon development mechanism**: Promote the green transformation of industry, energy, transportation, construction, agriculture and other sectors; foster green and low-carbon industries; and optimize spatial patterns and consumption models.
- **Circular economy**: Implement the principles of "reduction, reuse and recycling"; strengthen cleaner production audits and technology promotion; and improve the waste recycling system covering comprehensive utilization of industrial waste, domestic waste sorting and recycling, and agricultural waste resource utilization.
- **Energy conservation and transition**: Strengthen energy conservation; promote the clean and efficient use of fossil energy and the development of non-fossil energy; build a new clean, low-carbon, safe and efficient energy system; and implement the goals of carbon peaking and carbon neutrality.
- **Response to climate change**: Establish a regulatory system for mitigating and adapting to climate change; strengthen greenhouse gas emission control; advance international cooperation and technological innovation; and enhance climate risk prevention and control capacity.

Part V: Legal Liability and Supplementary Provisions – Strengthening Penalties and Implementation Guarantees

It clarifies legal liabilities for violations of various ecological and environmental management provisions, covering administrative penalties, credit disciplinary measures, compensation for ecological damage, public interest litigation and other means. Accountability is imposed for dereliction of duty and breach of responsibility.

After the implementation of the *Ecological and Environmental Code of the People's Republic of China*, it will replace 10 current separate laws through **comprehensive integration and simultaneous repeal**, forming an applicable pattern of "the Code as the governing law, with special laws taking precedence" together with other relevant laws.

The 10 core laws to be repealed simultaneously are:

- Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China
- Environmental Impact Assessment Law of the People's Republic of China
- Cleaner Production Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Atmospheric Pollution
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Waste
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Noise Pollution
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Radioactive Pollution
- Marine Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China

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For more detailed information, please contact us.

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