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Environment – some positive moves

While it is no secret that there is a pollution problem in China, it might come as a surprise to most just how much work the Chinese government and the Chinese people are doing to overcome this situation.

Air Pollution

The burning of brown coal to supply China's relentless need for energy has produced some negative consequences. The quality of the air in most Chinese capital cities has diminished considerably. The government is taking active steps to counter this and one of the most significant is the efforts by the State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) which oversees all pollution related issues. Another is the Cleaner Production Promotion Law (2002) at central government level and activities by municipal governments such as the one in Beijing, which ordered all buses to run on the cleaner LPG fuel. The Beijing Municipality now boasts the largest fleet of Liquid Petroleum Gas fueled buses in the world.

Renewable Energy

There is obviously evidence of much petroleum and coal burning energy in China, but it is not widely known that the second most important electricity energy source in China is renewable energy (nearly 20%). Hydro-electric power is the major source, but there is also a significant effort in the area of wind based technologies (mostly in the islands and Inner Mongolia) and to a lesser degree, solar (mostly household)

The 'Polluter Pays' principle China has introduced/is in the process of introducing controls tied to economic benefits:

- Introduced a tax on higher sulfur burning coals (in an effort to move producers to cleaner fuel)
- A system of 'emissions trading' (similar to that in the US and as outlined in the Kyoto Protocol)
- General formulation of tax structures that are beneficial to environmental protection (already occurring in Zhejiang Province)
- Granting of preferential loans and subsidies to enterprises that construct and operate pollution treatment facilities