

## New energy law makes large-scale consumers more accountable



*A solar park in Cuba (source: [Adekante/KI-scaled](#))*

In the context of the ongoing energy crisis, the Cuban government has issued a new law to control and make more efficient the consumption of electricity. The regulations affect both state and private large-scale consumers, as well as joint ventures and foreign representations. In the future, they will have to produce a portion of their energy themselves on the basis of renewable sources or make corresponding compensatory payments.

### **The 50-percent-rule: New renewable power requirements**

The decree [published in the Official Journal on Tuesday](#) defines “large-scale consumers” as all those economic operators and institutions that had an average monthly consumption of at least 30 megawatt hours or 50,000 liters of fuel last year.

They now have three years to install renewable energy sources (of their choice, but solar is likely to be the norm) that will enable them to generate at least 50 percent of their electricity needs during the peak period of the day (11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.).

If the installation of photovoltaic systems is not possible for structural reasons, the affected parties must sign a contract with the electricity supplier UNE, which will then ensure that the necessary solar power is expanded elsewhere. While existing parties that have been classified as large consumers have until December 2027, the 50 percent rule applies immediately to newly emerging large consumers.

## **The goal: to change the energy mix**

[According to Leisy Hernández González](#), Director General of the National Office for the Rational Use of Energy (ONURE), the regulation aims to ensure that each of these users generates their own electricity from renewable sources. This is part of the government's measures to change the energy mix on the island. Cuba plans to generate at least 37 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

“New investments made today must necessarily be made with renewable energies,” emphasized ONURE director González, because, “given the current situation of the national power grid, it is impossible to continue to bear a burden that will exacerbate the supply situation of the population.”

The new decree does not apply to private households, but it does apply to state-owned and private enterprises, institutions and organizations, cooperatives, self-employed individuals, and foreign representations. These must also set up a management system to control and efficiently use energy sources and renewable sources “in order to achieve greater efficiency, rationality and savings,” according to the law known as “Decree 110”, which comes into force on December 26.

## **Requirements for new energy management**

In the future, large-scale consumers will have to have their energy management systems certified by the national standardization office “in accordance with the requirements of the Cuban and [international ISO 50001](#) standard”.

“All economic actors that already exist today have to make plans. They have to create programs for the introduction of renewable energy sources over a period of 3 to 5 years and be able to install these sources,” González told Cuban television.

In this context, she recommended that stakeholders familiarize themselves with the new decree, since during inspections or when applying for new permits, “their plans for renewable energies as one of their electricity sources will be required.”

## **New tariffs for peak consumption**

The decree also announces the introduction of a special, significantly higher, tariff for electricity consumption at peak times, which is no longer subsidized. For the first time, “the real cost of diesel-based power generation at the official exchange rate approved by the Cuban Central Bank” will be used as a reference. The tariff applies “to new investments considered to be large-scale consumers, from the time of commissioning.”

For existing large-scale consumers, the new tariffs will not take effect until three years after the publication of the decree, i.e. from November 2027. Excluded are companies in the Mariel Special Economic Zone (ZEDM).

The decree also defines the various violations and sanctions that may be imposed on public and private economic actors.

Possible violations include, for example, “non-compliance or lack of a monthly consumption plan for each energy source”, “operation of air conditioning systems in non-technical rooms at temperatures below 24 degrees Celsius”, “non-compliance or lack of an electrical load adjustment study”, and “possession of energy-consuming devices that are operated without productive support”.

In the case of renewable energies, it is considered a violation if the systems and devices are in an “unsatisfactory technical condition” for their “efficient use and correct operation”.

The measures for violations range from a three-month reduction of 50 percent in fuel for state actors and the interruption of the power supply for up to 72 hours to fines of up to 15,000 pesos (about 120 euros at the official exchange rate), which can be increased to 20,000 pesos if the country is in an “energy crisis”.

### **Emergency regime to prevent blackouts**

The decree establishes specific procedures for such an emergency regime for the first time. According to the decree, the Minister of Energy and Mining is obliged to propose a special emergency regime for electricity supply to the Council of Ministers if “the national power system can no longer meet demand with the available capacity”.

The energy emergency has led to a series of energy-saving measures. For example, as long as the emergency regime is in place, electric ovens and air conditioners must be completely switched off during peak hours, and air conditioners must generally be set to a temperature of at least 25 degrees Celsius. Streetlights will only be activated in prioritized areas, and offices are required to reduce room lighting by 50 percent. Water pumps must stop operating at night. If necessary, a planned shutdown of circuits can also be carried out for a period of more than 72 hours.

As the law states, the Council of Ministers has 48 hours to decide on the proposal to declare an energy emergency. If approved, the Minister of Energy will inform the central state authorities and provincial administrations within 24 hours. At the same time, the responsible regulatory authority (ONURE) will ensure that the emergency regime is publicized nationwide through regional energy councils and municipal organizations.

The ability to quickly switch the power supply to “crisis mode” if necessary should help to avoid another nationwide blackout like the one that occurred [on October 18](#).

[\(Cubaheute\)](#)