

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 317
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.08.2025

FGD Exemption Policy

317*. SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR ALIAS VIJAY VASANTH:
SHRI SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the alternative technological or regulatory measures proposed to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions in the absence of Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) systems in thermal power plants;
- (b) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that the health impact of sulphur dioxide emissions on vulnerable groups living near power plants due to FGD exemption;
- (c) whether there was a formal consultation process with civil society organizations before finalizing the exemptions from installing FGDs, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the measures taken to respond to the concerns regarding the long-term impact of not installing FGDs; and
- (e) whether the Government will consider revisiting the FGD exemption policy and making the installation of desulphurisation systems mandatory for all thermal power plants, in view of concerns regarding public health and environmental protection, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

(a) to (e) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARAS (a) to (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. 317 DUE FOR REPLY ON 11.08.2025 REGARDING FGD EXEMPTION POLICY BY SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR ALIAS VIJAY VASANTH AND SHRI SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR, HON'BLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

(a) to (e):

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) notified emission standards for coal/lignite-fired Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) vide Notification dated 07.12.2015. The SO₂ emission standards prescribed vide Notification dated 07.12.2015 have been reviewed by the Central Government taking into consideration the various representations received regarding exemption or relaxation in timelines of these emission standards.

Besides, studies conducted by research institutions such as Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), regarding effectiveness and rationale behind these standards and its role in overall ambient air pollution of the region, were also considered to evaluate the need of universal applicability and enforcement of these standards. Apart from these studies, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) had also conducted a simulation modelling of emission from source of Thermal Power Plant for different scenarios/matrix through Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

Stakeholders' consultation meetings to discuss the matter were also held among MoEFCC, Ministry of Power (MoP), CPCB, Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to Govt. of India, Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Scientific Institutions, and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).

After detailed review of the matter, the Ministry has issued Notification vide G.S.R. 465 (E) dated 11.07.2025 regarding the applicability of SO₂ emission standards notified vide Notification dated 07.12.2015. Accordingly, the applicability and timelines for compliance of SO₂ emission standards by TPPs are as follows:

Category	Applicability of SO₂ emission standards	Time limit for compliance
Category A (Plants within 10 km radius of NCR or cities having million plus population)	Mandatory	31.12.2027
Category B (Plants within 10 km radius of non-attainment cities or critically polluted areas)	To be decided on a case to case basis by the Central Government based upon the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee (Thermal Projects). In case any TPP is considered for non-applicability of SO ₂ emission standards, such TPP shall ensure meeting stack height as per Notification no. G.S.R. 742 (E) dated 30.08.1990.	31.12.2028
Category C (Other than those included in Category A and B)	Not applicable subject to condition of meeting stack height as per Notification no. G.S.R. 742 (E) dated 30.08.1990.	31.12.2029

The category-wise applicability of SO₂ emission standards in TPPs has been decided based on detailed scientific studies and analysis of ambient SO₂ concentrations across the country, including areas near TPPs. The decision taken by the Central Government while issuing Notification dated 11.07.2025 is based on scientific approach, environmental sustainability and environmental benefits/loss in achieving SO₂ emission norms as well as techno-economic feasibility of implementing such control measures across all coal/lignite-based TPPs. This approach applies the precautionary principle for controlling and abating air pollution in densely populated and other air pollution-sensitive areas, while also considering to safeguard consumers from the heavy burden due to potential increases in electricity prices. This approach further demonstrates resource conservation by avoiding additional consumption of water, auxiliary power, and limestone; it also considers the increase in carbon footprint/CO₂ emissions resulting from the operation of deployed control measures, as well as the mining and transportation of limestone required for these measures.

TPPs are required to comply with the emission standards notified by MoEFCC within the prescribed time limits, failing which environmental compensation shall be imposed on the non-compliant TPP units for operation beyond the prescribed time limit. In all such cases where SO₂ emission standards are not being made applicable, TPPs shall ensure compliance of stack height criteria notified vide Notification number GSR 742 (E) dated the 30.08.1990 governing SO₂ emissions from TPPs to aid proper dispersion of pollutants and mitigate environmental impacts.
