



Energy Strategy 2050: Chronology

23 March 2011: As a consequence of the nuclear disaster of 11 March 2011 in Fukushima the Federal Council instructs the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) to examine the current energy strategy and to update the Energy Outlook 2035. These have been regularly revised since the 1970s and their purpose is to present options for the planning of a long-term, sustainable energy policy.

[Media release dated 23 March 2011 \(in German\)](#)

25 May 2011: The Federal Council takes a decision on policy direction in favour of a progressive withdrawal from nuclear energy production. The existing nuclear power stations are to be shut down at the end of their technically safe operating life and not replaced by new ones.

[Media release dated 25 May 2011 \(in German\)](#)

[Media conference](#)

Winter session 2011: Parliament is also in favour of a progressive withdrawal from nuclear energy production. It submits three motions to the Federal Council calling upon it to develop a comprehensive energy strategy which guarantees the supply of electricity without nuclear energy and, as far as possible, independently of foreign supply sources.

[Motion Schmidt Roberto \(in German\)](#)

[Motion BDP \(in German\)](#)

[Motion Grüne \(in German\)](#)

18 April 2012: The Federal Council determines that the progressive withdrawal from nuclear energy production is technically and economically feasible. DETEC is instructed to draw up an initial set of measures to this effect.

[Media release dated 18 April 2012 \(in German\)](#)

[Media conference](#)

28 September 2012: The Federal Council initiates the consultation process on the first set of measures; the process lasts until 31 January 2013. In all, 459 opinions are recorded.

[Press release dated 28 September 2012 \(in German\)](#)

[Media conference](#)

[Consultation procedure](#)

16 November 2012: The Green Party files the popular initiative “For an orderly withdrawal from the nuclear energy programme” (“Atomausstiegsinitiative”) with 107,533 valid signatures. The initiative calls for a ban on all new nuclear power stations in Switzerland and for deadlines for shutting down the existing ones. The Confederation is to base its legislation on a reduction in consumption, greater efficiency and renewable energies.

[Media release dated 16 November 2012 \(in German\)](#)



Spring session 2013: Parliament approves the action plan for “Coordinated Energy Research Switzerland”. In so doing the Confederation boosts its financial support for energy research in the years 2013 to 2016.

[Parliamentary debates](#)

21 June 2013: Parliament decides on a partial revision of the Energy Act. One particular result of this decision is the increase to 1.5 cts./kWh in the maximum amount of the grid surcharge, which, among other things, serves to finance the cost-covering remuneration for feed-in to the electricity grid. At the same time, large electricity-consuming enterprises are exempted from this supplement. This revision comes into force on 1 January 2014.

[Parliamentary initiative 12.400 \(in German\)](#)

4 September 2013: The Federal Council adopts its dispatch on the new Energy Act (as part of the initial set of measures for Energy Strategy 2015). It also calls for a partial revision of other federal laws. The Federal Council sees its draft as an indirect counterproposal to the initiative proposing withdrawal from the nuclear energy programme.

[Media release dated 4 September 2013 \(in German\)](#)

[Media conference](#)

October and November 2013: The National Council’s Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy Committee (ESPEC-N) conducts comprehensive hearings before agreeing to the new Energy Act by a vote of 18 to 7 in favour on 5 November 2013.

[Media release dated 5 November 2013 \(in German\)](#)

January 2014 to October 2014: The ESPEC leads the detailed discussions on the new Energy Act. In particular, it thoroughly investigates the question of subsidising hydro-electric power and creates a sub-committee for this purpose in spring 2014. On 28 October the committee accepts the legislative package by a vote of 14 to 9 in favour, with two abstentions.

[Media release dated 21 January 2014 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 2 April 2014 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 30 April 2014 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 25 August 2014 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 26 August 2014 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 28 October 2014 \(in German\)](#)

Winter session 2014: The National Council is the first of the parliamentary chambers to debate the new Energy Act. This debate results in a draft bill which by and large follows the draft of the Federal Council. However, the National Council diverges from the Federal Council’s draft on the following specific points:

- Subsidising large hydro-electric power stations: the National Council wishes to assist large plants (> 10 MW) with investment subsidies, not just small ones.
- Tax incentives for the energy-saving renovation of buildings: as a new measure, money invested in replacement construction is also to be deductible. Furthermore, the cost of energy-saving renovations is to be deductible over the following four years. However, reaching a minimum energy standard is to be a prerequisite to qualify for this deduction.
- Long-term operation of existing nuclear power stations: the National Council decides on special provisions for nuclear power stations which have been in operation for more than 40 years. In particular, they must submit a long-term operations concept every ten years, and this



concept must be approved by the Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (ENSI). A power station which is more than 40 years old at the time the law comes into force must be taken out of service after 60 years of age at the latest. This provision would apply to the two reactors Beznau I and II in particular.

In addition, the National Council recommends the rejection of the initiative “For an orderly withdrawal from the nuclear energy programme” (“Atomausstiegsinitiative”).

[National Council debate of 1 December 2014](#)

[National Council debate of 2 December 2014](#)

[National Council debate of 3 December 2014](#)

[National Council debate of 4 December 2014](#)

[National Council debate of 8 December 2014](#)

[National Council debate of 9 December 2014](#)

January 2015 to August 2015: The Council of States' Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy Committee (ESPEC-S) addresses the new Energy Act.

[Media release dated 13 February 2015 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 2 April 2015 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 30 April 2015 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 28 May 2015 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 12 August 2015 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 20 August 2015 \(in German\)](#)

Autumn session 2015: The Council of States debates the new Energy Act. Basically, it adopts the Federal Council's position, but makes a few additions:

- Time limit for subsidies: the law should stipulate the date by which renewable energies should be subsidised in Switzerland.
- Existing large hydro-electric power stations (> 10 MW): the Council of States wants to use the grid surcharge fund to provide financial support for installations in extreme financial difficulties. However, operators and the cantons should also contribute, the latter through a reduction in water rates.
- Tax incentives for energy-saving building renovation: there should be no amendments to tax legislation.
- Long-term operation of existing nuclear power stations: the Council of States is opposed to placing a limitation on the operational life of the nuclear power stations. It also rejects the National Council's legal obligation for them to produce a long-term operations concept.

October 2015 to January 2016: The ESPEC-N addresses the changes proposed by the Council of States in the new Energy Act.

[Media release dated 4 November 2015 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 26 January 2016 \(in German\)](#)

28 October 2015: The Federal Council adopts the dispatch on the constitutional article concerning the system for climate and energy management.

[Media release dated 28 October 2015 \(in German\)](#)

[Media conference](#)



Spring session 2016: The National Council holds its second debate on the new Energy Act. Various differences in position are settled. However, questions in two different fields remain:

- Existing large hydro-electric power stations are to receive a premium if they are unable to cover their costs by the sale of electricity, something which often occurs in the present situation in the electricity market. Thus the prerequisite of being deemed in extreme financial difficulties, as decided on by the Council of States, does not apply. Participation of the cantons is also dropped.
- Tax incentives for energy-saving building renovation: the National Council stands by its decisions; in fact, it goes a step further by not making a minimum energy standard a prerequisite for deductibility.

After the Council of States also rejects the initiative “For an orderly withdrawal from the nuclear energy programme” (“Atomausstiegsinitiative”), Parliament formulates a recommendation for the referendum: it recommends that the people and cantons reject the initiative.

[National Council debate of 2 March 2016](#)

[National Council debate of 2 March 2016](#)

[National Council debate of 2 March 2016](#)

[Council of States debate of 9 March 2016](#)

13 April 2016: The Federal Council adopts its dispatch on the Federal Act on the Conversion and Expansion of the Electricity Grid (Electricity Grid Strategy).

[Media release dated 13 April 2016 \(in German, French and Italian\)](#)

April and May 2016: The ESPEC-S again addresses the question of the differences in the new Energy Act.

[Media release dated 19 April 2016 \(in German\)](#)

[Media release dated 18 May 2016 \(in German\)](#)

Summer session 2016: The Council of States holds its second debate on the new Energy Act.

[Council of States debate of 31 May 2016](#)

4 July 2016: The ESPEC-N addresses the question of the differences in the new Energy Act.

[Media release dated 5 July 2016 \(in German\)](#)

Autumn session 2016: National Council and Council of States hold their third debate on the new Energy Act. Parliament approves the draft bill in a final vote on 30 September 2016. The period within which a referendum may be requested runs from 11 October 2016 to 19 January 2017.

[National Council debate of 12 September 2016](#)

[Council of States debate of 19 September 2016](#)

[Text submitted to referendum](#)

27 November 2016: The people and the cantons reject the nuclear withdrawal initiative.

[Result of the vote](#)

Winter session 2016: The Council of States is the first chamber to discuss the Electricity Grid Strategy.

[Council of States debate of 8 December 2016](#)



31 January 2017: The referendum request against the new Energy Act has been successful.
[Media release dated 31 January 2017 \(in German\)](#)

1 February 2017: The Federal Council launches the consultation procedure on implementing provisions relating to the new Energy Act. It runs from 1 February to 8 May 2017.
[Media release dated 1 February 2017 \(in German\)](#)

Spring session 2017: The National Council decides not to debate a proposal for a constitutional article on a climate and energy incentive system.
[National Council debate of 8 March 2017](#)

21 May 2017: Swiss voters adopt the new Energy Act by 58.2% of the vote.
[Results of the vote](#)

Summer session 2017: The National Council debates the Electricity Grid Strategy.
[National Council debate of 29 May 2017](#)
[National Council debate of 30 May 2017](#)

Summer session 2017: The Council of States also decides not to debate the proposal for a constitutional article on a climate and energy incentive system. The proposal is dropped.
[National Council debate 12 June 2017](#)

Autumn session 2017: The two chambers of parliament debate the differences in the Electricity Grid Strategy (second debate).
[Council of States debate of 13 September 2017](#)
[National Council debate of 25 September 2017](#)

1 November 2017: The Federal Council agrees on the implementing provisions to the new Energy Act.¹
[Media release](#)
[Law texts](#)

Winter session 2017: The two chambers of parliament debate the differences in the Electricity Grid Strategy (third debate). They adopt the draft in the final vote.
[Council of States debate of 30 November 2017](#)
[National Council debate of December 2017](#)
[Council of States debate \(compromise motion\) of 13 December 2017](#)
[National Council debate \(compromise motion\) of 13 December 2017](#)
[Council of States final vote of 15 December 2017](#)
[National Council final vote of 15 December 2017](#)
[Text submitted to referendum](#)

1 January 2018: The new Energy Act and its implementing provisions enter into force.²

¹ With the exception of the amendment to the Ordinance on property costs (*Liegenschaftskostenverordnung*)

² The amendment to the Federal Act on Direct Federal Taxation does not come into force until 1 January 2020. Article 37 and Article 146e of the CO₂ Ordinance come into force on 1 December 2017.