

Consumer Council Submission

**Bills Committee on
Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2001**

The Consumer Council supports the Bill in principle which aims at introducing a more effective means to control unlicensed and unhygienic food establishments by expediting the process of closure order. This will quickly prevent those food businesses in question from operating.

Issuance of a closure order by the court should provide adequate assurance that the matter has been dealt with in a fair and just manner, and is seen to be so.

From the consumer perspective, the Bill promotes consumer protection through timely intervention and other safeguards to ensure consumer health and food safety. The measures should also enhance the attractiveness of Hong Kong as a 'Food Paradise'.

There is one aspect which may need further consideration and clarification. Upon closure of the premises pursuant to the said provisions, some persons may still be allowed to stay on the premises. This opens the possibilities that the prohibited activities may carry on. (Note: The Authority may not exercise its power to disconnect all gas, water and electricity supplies to those premises respectively under S.128B (8) and S.128C (11)). For this reason, the Council suggests that it should be made known to the public that carrying on the prohibited activities in the said premise will be subject to heavy penalty.

22 May 2001