

Knecht, Bruce

Bruce Knecht
Tregunter Tower 3 (59-C)
14 Tregunter Path
Mid-Levels

November 17, 2000

Dear LegCo Members:

Hon. James Tien Pei-chun
Hon. Cyd Ho Sau-lan
Hon. Lee Cheuk-yan
Hon. Chan Kwok-keung
Hon. Bernard Chan
Hon. Leung Yiu-chung
Hon. Miriam Lau Kin-yee
Hon. Emily Lau Wai-hing
Hon. Choy So-yuk
Hon. Andrew Cheng Kar-foo
Hon. Law Chi-kwong
Dr Hon. Tang Siu-tong
Hon. Abraham Shek La-him
Hon. Henry Wu King-cheong
Hon. Ip Kwok-him

I understand that the Legislative Council is debating whether to delay the implementation of the increased Fixed Penalty Fine for smoky vehicles. Hong Kong's air pollution has reached a crisis point where immediate measures need to be taken to protect public health. There were over 59 exceedances of short term Air Quality Objectives in 1999 alone. The number of hospitalisation days for respiratory cases has increased by 23% since 1996. In the interests of public health, I urge you to vote against a delay for the following reasons:

1. Air pollution is still a significant problem in Hong Kong and fumes from diesel engines are a significant public health hazard.
2. Over 90% of vehicles spotted emitting black smoke pass the test after getting their vehicles fixed. This proves that the repair trade is perfectly able to tune engines properly.
3. A well maintained engine should not emit black smoke.
4. An increased fine is the best deterrent to force vehicle owners to undertake preventive maintenance.
5. Those owners of vehicles emitting black smoke are breaking the law.
6. When LegCo passed the increased fine in June this was not contingent on any measures such as the LPG scheme or availability of catalytic convertors being available. The progress with these other initiatives is a separate issue and should not be used as an excuse to delay the increased fine.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Knecht