

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Proposed Amendment to
Air Pollution Control (Vehicle Design Standards)
(Emission) Regulations
(Cap. 311, sub. leg.)**

**Euro III Emission Standards
for Newly Registered Motor Vehicles**

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' advice on the proposal to amend the Air Pollution Control (Vehicle Design Standards) (Emission) Regulations to tighten the emission standards for certain classes of newly registered vehicles to Euro III standards.

Background

2. Emissions from motor vehicles are the major cause of street-level air pollution. To reduce vehicle emissions, one of the Administration's policies is to require newly registered vehicles to meet the most stringent emission standard where technologically practicable and available. With the approval of the Legislative Council, we tightened the emission standards for certain classes of vehicles below 3.5 tonnes to Euro III in January 2001, in step with the European Union, and adopted comparable standards used in the USA and Japan for such vehicles.

The Proposal

3. The European Union will apply Euro III emission standards to newly registered vehicles above 3.5 tonnes on 1 October 2001. It will apply the new standards to the remaining classes of motor vehicles below 3.5 tonnes on 1 January 2002. We propose that Hong Kong should follow suit but to exclude newly registered diesel light buses between 3.5 and 4 tonnes from the new requirement for the time being pending the Administration's

decision on the way forward on the proposal to replace existing diesel light buses with alternative-fuel vehicles. We will elaborate on this point in paragraph 5 below. As in the past, we will also adopt Japanese and American standards comparable to Euro III where appropriate for vehicles that will be subject to the new standards.

4. It is proposed that the Air Pollution Control (Vehicle Design Standards) (Emission) Regulations be amended to –

- (a) tighten the emission standards for newly registered vehicles of design weight above 3.5 tonnes to Euro III or the equivalent standards adopted in the USA or Japan from 1 October 2001. Diesel light buses of design weight between 3.5 and 4 tonnes shall be excluded and continue to be subject to the current Euro II emission standards;
- (b) tighten the emission standards for certain classes of newly registered motor vehicles of design weight below 3.5 tonnes to Euro III or the equivalent standards adopted in the USA and Japan from 1 January 2002; and
- (c) require the installation of on-board diagnostic system on newly registered vehicles of design weight below 3.5 tonnes from 1 January 2002.

Excluding diesel light buses between 3.5 to 4 tonnes from Euro III standards

5. The 16-seater light buses that weigh between 3.5 and 4 tonnes in Hong Kong come mainly from Japan and are specially made for the Hong Kong market. The major supplier, who has over 90% share of the Hong Kong market, has indicated that it would decide on whether to set up a production line for Euro III diesel light buses pending the Administration's decision on the way forward on the proposal to replace existing diesel light buses with LPG/electric vehicles. As there are only 6,000 diesel light buses in Hong Kong, the supplier considered that it would not be commercially viable for it to produce both diesel and LPG light buses. If Euro III or equivalent emission standards were applied to diesel light buses in this class

from October 2001, there would be a problem in the supply of new diesel vehicles. In the light of this unique situation, both the light bus trade and the Motor Traders Association consider that it would not be acceptable to apply Euro III or the equivalent emission standards to newly registered diesel light buses in this class from October 2001. As it is our policy to take into account the availability of suitable vehicles as one of the major considerations in tightening vehicle emission standards, we propose that diesel light buses between 3.5 and 4 tonnes should continue to be subject to the current Euro II emission standards until the way forward regarding the introduction of alternative-fuel light buses becomes clear.

Consultation

6. The Motor Traders Association has confirmed that local vehicle suppliers would have no problem with the proposals set out in paragraph 4 above in terms of vehicle availability.

7. We have consulted the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) on our proposal. Its members are supportive of it.

Financial and Staff Implications

8. Implementation of the proposed amendments to the Air Pollution Control (Vehicle Design Standards) (Emission) Regulations will not require any additional financial commitment from Government or additional staff.

Public Reaction

9. The general public are expected to welcome the proposal because the introduction of less polluting vehicles will help to improve air quality.

Advice Sought

10. Members are requested to advise on the proposed amendments as set out in paragraph 4 above.

Environment and Food Bureau
May 2001