

Administration's Responses

I. Aircraft Noise

As a follow-up to the question raised by the Hon Albert Chan on the reason why the aircraft noise issue is not included in the Policy Objective for Environment and Food Bureau, we would like to advise that aircraft noise is subject to regulation under the Civil Aviation (Aircraft Noise) Ordinance which is under the policy purview of Economic Services Bureau. The Director of Civil Aviation (DCA) is the regulatory authority under the Ordinance. Unlike the regulation of other noise sources, aircraft noise standards are set out in the Convention on International Civil Aviation. As measures to mitigate aircraft noise affect aircraft operation, DAC is the most appropriate authority within Government to regulate aircraft noise.

II. Waste Management

Quantitative Analysis of Dioxin Generated by Incinerators

The Chemical Waste Treatment Centre has been monitoring dioxin emissions. Based on the measurement results, the concentrations of dioxins in 2000 (up to November) ranged from 0.004 to 0.0166ng/m³, which is far below the emission limit of 0.1ng/m³. The total quantity of dioxins emitted in 2000 (up to November) amounted to about 0.87mg.

Other than the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre, there are two other small pathological incinerators at Yan Chai and Tuen Mun hospitals. The Hospital Authority has since early 1999 agreed not to incinerate materials that contain precursors to dioxin formation (e.g. syringes). Hence, emission of dioxins from these incinerators is not expected.

Closure of Incinerators

There are three waste incinerators in Hong Kong : a chemical waste incinerator in Tsing Yi and two pathological incinerators located in Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun. They account for a very small share of the major pollutants emitted into the air by local sources : about 0.27% of particulates, 0.04% of sulphur dioxide and 0.02% of nitrogen oxides in 1999. Their emissions are discharged at height and disperse considerably more effectively than motor vehicle emissions. The impact of the emissions of the incinerators on public health is much smaller than motor vehicle emissions. The effect of closing the incinerators when API is very high such as when it reaches 200 will therefore be minimal. Under the foregoing, Government does not see a strong ground for closing the incinerators if the API ever reaches 200. As the closure of the chemical waste incinerator in Tsing Yi under the circumstances mentioned is a hypothetical situation, it is not possible to estimate with any degree of accuracy a claim which might arise.