

Letterhead of Friends of the Earth

19 September 2001

Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong
The Chairman
Finance Committee, Legislative Council
Hong Kong SAR Government
8 Jackson Road, The Legislative Council Building, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Dr Wong

HK\$100 millions for Waste Reduction Programmes

I am writing in response to a series of new initiatives recently put forward by the HKSAR Government to tackle our solid waste problems.

I would like to register my concern on a special fund of HK\$100 millions in support of community-based waste reduction programmes and activities. It was announced by the Environment and Food Bureau (EFB) and that the proposed funding mechanism will rest with the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF), a fund set up by the Government in support of environmental researches.

As a member of the Waste Reduction Committee (WRC) and on behalf of Friends of the Earth, I object to the idea of simply having ECF to take charge of the special fund in waste reduction aspects. WRC, as a specialized entity on waste issues, is also set up by the Government to deal with Hong Kong's waste issues since February 1999. In fact, I would suggest that WRC could be the Committee to review proposals and give recommendations to the most appropriate body to distribute the actual funds to successful applicants.

In addition, we have observed that the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) has been receiving a lot of funding from ECF for its programmes, e.g., World Environment Day, Environmental Protection Festival and many other community projects. We envisage an unbalanced allocation of funds to many other non-government organizations (NGOs) to pilot their community projects. Due to the existing relationship between the ECC and ECF, it would not be persuasive for the

fund to be controlled under the remit of the ECF.

The Quality Education Fund (QEF) was being challenged recently by the Audit Commission on allocating funds for government bodies to do educational programmes. Likewise, the ECF is supposed to provide funding for NGOs, schools and academic institutions. There has been a query among the NGOs that whether ECC is justified to receive funding from ECF to implement its programmes and at the same time soliciting private sponsorships all these years.

Our ultimate goal is to arrive at a fair system. I urge the Finance Committee of Legislative Council to work with the EFB in appointing the most appropriate body to manage the HK\$100 millions fund for community-based waste reduction initiatives.

Yours sincerely

Edwin Lau
Assistant Director, Friends of the Earth (HK)
Member of Waste Reduction Committee

c.c. Members of the Finance Committee of Legislative Council