

ETWB(W) 660/72/01 Pt. 3

CB1/BC/10/01

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**By Fax (2121 0420)**

**( Translation )**

31 December 2002

Clerk to Bills Committee  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong  
(Attn: Mrs Queenie Yu)

Dear Mrs Yu,

**Bills Committee on  
Land (Miscellaneous Provisions)(Amendment) Bill 2002**

Thank you for your letter dated 13 December 2002, with an anonymous letter to Hon. Emily Lau from a person claiming to be a staff of one of the utility undertakings (UUs) attached. Highways Department has studied the letter, and would like to answer the points raised as follows:

1. A meeting was indeed held on 6.12.2002 amongst staff of Highways Department (HyD), Drainage Services Department (DSD) and Water Supplies Department (WSD) to discuss various matters including the operation of the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Bill 2002, modifications to excavation permit conditions, and the proposed site visit by LegCo Members. Being an internal meeting, we had not invited the UUs to attend. Hence what as alleged by the writer, claiming to be a staff of one of the UUs, that HyD asked the participant UUs not to make any unfavourable remarks on HyD is totally fictitious.

2. At the meeting, Mr Yeung, Chief Engineer of HyD, reported progress on the improvement works at junction of Lei Yue Mun Road and Yau Tong Road. He mentioned in passing that for this site, most of the time at the current stage there were UUs carrying out work. Mr Yeung had no intention of putting blames on the UUs for anything wrong that may be present.
3. The objective of audit inspections carried out by HyD on street excavations is to remind the promoters and their contractors any needs to make improvements. HyD adopts a set of guidelines common to all audit inspections, including those of HyD, other government departments and UUs. The guidelines together with a set of photographs illustrating good and poor practice and copies of the guidelines were distributed to the relevant government departments and UUs to ensure consistency of standards. There exists no double standard as alleged. If Members are interested to launch surprise site visits to gain a better understanding about the situation, the top management of HyD is most pleased to accompany.
4. The performance of HyD, other government departments and UUs in street excavations has always been assessed in a fair and open manner. Results of the assessments are made known to UUs and are discussed in various levels of meetings for experience sharing and learning. HyD does not hide anybody's poor performance, including the shortcomings of its own or other government contractors. In fact, to help UUs to improve, HyD has conducted briefing sessions and is now assisting the Construction Industry Training Authority to organize relevant training courses. In the beginning of the third paragraph, the letter admitted that improvements were brought about by implementation of audit inspections by HyD.
5. To ensure adequate control over street excavations, HyD maintains an adequate frequency of audit inspections on UUs' sites. There is certainly no 'quota' on the number of poor reports to be issued to UUs as alleged in the letter.
6. The letter mentioned about a piece of pavement resurfacing work at Farm Road. As it was required to complete resurfacing a run-in in a relatively short time of two days, it was necessary to enlarge the working space at any one time. We regret any inconvenience that may have caused to pedestrians. HyD has urged its staff and contractors to be mindful of such matters and to make improvements in such situations in future.
7. There are certain suggestions about improvement to the audit inspections in the letter. HyD welcomes such suggestions, and will continue to improve the audit inspection system. The suggestions had already been discussed in detail in meetings of the Bills Committee

We believe we have answered the points raised by the complainant. If Members have any further query, they are welcomed to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

( C S Wai )  
for Secretary for the Environment,  
Transport and Works