



Submission to LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

The Conservancy Association

24 June 2002

1. The Conservancy Association supports the implementation of a landfill charge. As pointed out in many of our previous papers, including our comments on the Chief Executive's Policy Addresses, we are of the view that landfill charging is an important step to a sustainable waste management regime. This is in line with most other developed economies where wastes disposed of in landfills are charged to recover the capital and operation costs of disposal. With landfill charge, waste generators will be given the economic incentive to consider if the waste generated can be sorted and recovered before they are disposed.
2. Although the landfill charge by itself alone is not a panacea, we believe that that the proposed charge will encourage waste reduction and recycling. In Korea, the volume based charges introduced on 1 Jan 1995, accompanied by recycling projects, have successfully reduced waste generation by about 30% in Seoul and 35% in small cities. Similarly, in Taipei, volume based charges introduced in July 2000 also led to nearly 30% of reduction in domestic wastes.
3. The levy of landfill charge will also indirectly help recyclers who are currently competing for recyclable materials which are disposed of in landfills free of charge.
4. We are glad to see that the Government's effort in implementing the landfill charging scheme by addressing various concern such as cash flow and bad debts raised by waste haulers and construction companies.
5. CA agreed that other forms of charges might be introduced later to reflect the true cost of waste disposal. Such charges include the costs incurred in the environmental and social impacts of the landfill operation and secondary pollution as well as the opportunity cost of land. This is commonly used in other developed economies in the form of landfill taxes, in addition to the landfill charge.
6. CA would propose that the revenue from the landfill charges be used to carry out waste reduction and minimization measures. In particular, emphasis should be put on the mobilization of the community in waste reduction and the provision of outlets and channels for minimization, reuse, recycling. It is important that waste generators are given an alternative method to dispose of their waste so that they can avoid or reduce the charges.
7. CA is of the opinion that other forms of economic incentives are implemented to complement waste charge, including producer responsibility and preferential procurement. CA believes that these measures will encourage the manufacturers, importers and consumers to adopt waste reduction measures upstream, ie when the products are produced and consumed, before turning into wastes.
8. CA welcomes the current landfill charge proposal as the first step towards polluter pays principle. To fully realise the benefits mentioned above, landfill charge should gradually be extended to cover waste from other sources, including the industrial, commercial and domestic sources.