

Subject: landfill charging

PROPOSED LANDFILL CHARGING SCHEME

(explanatory note to position paper from REDA)

Similar to all other forms of waste production, construction wastes are also derived by necessity from human activities. Generally speaking, the extent of construction activities relates directly to the volume of construction waste produced.

In line with modern global trends, and the conscientious society of which we pride ourselves, Hongkong must venture to take positive actions and concrete steps to preserve and sustain our limited resources in the best way possible, imperatively with encouragements and incentives from the Government as well as all the constituents that make up the entire construction industry, all as described in the Tang Report of 2001.

Since the Tang Report, EPD and a host of other government Bureaux/Departments, together with professional institutes, environmental consultants, academia, developers, contractors, suppliers, subcontractors, and other relevant parties of our industry, backed by limited research efforts, have come together to discuss various ways forward on this subject of construction waste reduction. These discussions, in the true spirit of partnering, have been relatively thorough, and well documented in the respective websites, for reference by all those interested in mutually advancing the industry, and themselves. It remains to be seen how mutual benefits can be triggered catalytically via government's encouragements and statutory incentives.

Recommended considerations to be given to waste reduction are, but not limited to, the followings :-

- to plan for waste management, i.e. Waste Management Plan, at inception, design through to construction phases of the development (all members of the design/construction teams are encouraged to plan for this)
- to balance the cut and fill for site formation of developments on virgin land

- to re-use and re-cycle existing structures and buildings, through proper adequate and appropriate professional maintenance with a view to preserve/conserve
- to re-generate, re-vitalise, re-activate, and re-invigorate, including converting and adapting, all existing building stocks to appropriate usage, e.g. industrial building structures to be adapted to residential use
- to demolish only when absolute safety so requires
- to demolish only when urban planning so requires
- to design for long-life, re-use, and re-cycling
- to adopt modular design
- to use lean construction methodology
- to build with recycled materials
- to build with sorting facilities on sites, to enable recycle-friendliness
- to transport inert construction debris to designated areas, e.g. Tuen Mun 86

Waste reduction is a mentality, a frame of mind, a philosophy, and will completely succeed only if all constituents of the construction industry adopts this as their religion. While this may not be totally possible, we should at least start off in this direction.

The proposed landfill charging scheme, in the opinion of most developers, is a definite move in the right direction, and must be perceived to score on at least two fronts :-

1. to deter excessive and unnecessary waste production, requiring dumping, and
2. to trigger the possibility of material re-use and re-cycling.

Hence, in principle, REDA fully supports this proposed scheme. However, in order for this scheme to work smoothly, in these early days of waste management/reduction, plus the fact that our economy is flux, we feel it prudent to also take into consideration the valid concerns of most, or all, of the other constituents of this industry, prior to defining and fine-tuning the details into the Bill, e.g. to introduce this charge, only at cost to the government (at least for this introductory stage of proceedings).