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HB 9/2/1/117

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25 February 2002

Miss Becky YU
Clerk to LegCo Panel on Housing
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear

LegCo Panel on Housing
Meeting on 7 January 2002

At the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Housing on 7 January 2002, during discussion of “access of past beneficiaries of subsidised home ownership schemes to public rental housing”, Members passed a Motion requesting the Housing Authority to “relax the current restriction on past recipients of ‘housing benefits’ from the Government to apply for public rental housing for life after selling their flats, so that past recipients of ‘housing benefits’ from the Government who meet the income and asset limits for the Waiting List may apply for public rental housing two years after the sale of their flats, and in the case of those who face the special circumstances as cited by the Housing Department, including bankruptcy, receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, adverse changes in family conditions as well as medical problems in the family or personal problems, they should be allowed to apply for public rental housing immediately after the sale of their flats.”

The above Motion was considered at the meeting of the Housing Authority's Rental Housing Committee on 31 January 2002. The Committee considered it inappropriate to allow past beneficiaries of subsidised home ownership schemes unconditional access to public rental housing, but agreed that special arrangements through discretion exercised by the Housing Department should continue in order to enable households in genuine hardship to apply for public rental housing despite that they have already been given housing assistance in one form or another before. However, more systematic guidelines defining clearly the specific circumstances which merit special consideration should be formulated.

Having considered the views expressed by the LegCo Panel on Housing on 7 January 2002, the Housing Authority approved the following guidelines for discretionary rehousing for past beneficiaries of subsidised home ownership schemes :

- bankruptcy;
- financial hardship resulting in need for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance;
- adverse changes to family circumstances such as divorce, death of bread-winner, etc.;
- a significant drop in household income resulting in difficulties in financing the home purchase, and
- households beset with medical and social problems but not to the extent to qualify for compassionate rehousing.

An Assistant Director of Housing has been delegated with the authority to accept applications for public rental housing from past beneficiaries of subsidised home ownership schemes who meet the above guidelines, which were promulgated through a circular to frontline staff on 7 February 2002.

Grateful if you would convey the above decisions of the Housing Authority to the LegCo Panel on Housing.

With warm regards and best wishes for the Year of the Horse,

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Joey LAM)
for Secretary for Housing

c.c. Director of Housing

(Attn: Mr K H LAU)

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