

Our Ref: EFB 9/55/01/134

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7 December 2001

Miss Becky YU
Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs
Legislative Council Secretariat
3/F CitiBank Tower
3 Garden Road, Central
Hong Kong
(Fax: 2877 8024)

Dear Miss YU,

Light Buses Using Cleaner Fuel

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2001 attaching a submission signed by “a group of red public light bus drivers” to Members of the Legislative Council. Our comments on the issues raised in the submission regarding the repair and maintenance of LPG vehicles and the number of LPG filling stations are set out as follows:

I. Repair and Maintenance

- (A) Only those repair and maintenance works involving the fuel system of an LPG light bus need to be carried out in approved LPG vehicle repair workshops for safety reason. Other repair and maintenance works that do not involve the LPG fuel system, i.e. most of the works, including changing tires, air filters, brake linings, and lubricating oil, can be carried out in ordinary vehicle repair workshops, just like the existing diesel light buses. Owners are free to arrange with vehicle

suppliers or other repair workshops for regular repair and maintenance of their vehicles.

- (B) The replacement of vehicle parts should follow the schedules suggested by vehicle manufacturers. According to the data provided by the manufacturers, LPG light buses are comparable with diesel ones in terms of maintenance requirements and durability.
- (C) The follow-up actions to be taken in the case of a traffic accident are similar for LPG and diesel light buses. The Government does not require LPG light bus drivers or owners to take any special action in the event of a traffic accident.
- (D) Provided that existing vehicle repair workshops are suitably located and can demonstrate compliance with the Gas Safety Ordinance and the Fire Services Department's requirements, their owners may apply to the Gas Authority (i.e. the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services) for registering the workshops as approved LPG vehicle workshops. Among the 25 LPG vehicle repair workshops in operation or under construction, most are relatively small and not run by the vehicle suppliers.
- (E) The repair and maintenance requirements of LPG and diesel light buses are similar. As such, there should be little difference in the time taken to repair and maintain the two types of vehicles. The supply of parts depends on the manufacturers and suppliers. As the number of LPG light buses increases, it is expected that the market for the supply of parts for repair and maintenance will increase correspondingly.

II. LPG Stations

As at 5 December 2001, there are 18 LPG filling stations in Hong Kong, 8 of which are large-scale dedicated LPG filling stations. By around mid 2002, there will be 45 LPG filling stations in Hong Kong, 12 of which will be large-scale dedicated LPG filling stations.

We understand that there may not be LPG filling stations located near every light bus route, we have therefore proposed an incentive scheme to

encourage light bus owners to switch to LPG or electric vehicles instead of making it a mandatory requirement for all diesel light buses to switch to cleaner fuel.

The Transport Department has contacted the group of red public light bus drivers concerned and has arranged a meeting with their representatives to explain the details of the incentive scheme and discuss with them possible solutions to the problems they may encounter in switching to LPG or electric light buses.

Yours sincerely,

(Ivy Law)
for Secretary for the Environment and Food

c.c.

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