



# HONG KONG RETAIL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

## 香港零售管理協會

立法會 CB(2) 2678/05-06(01)號文件

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### Presentation to LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene 7 July 2006

#### Changes to Food Licencing Procedure

##### Introduction

I am Philippe Giard representing the Hong Kong Retail Management Association (HKRMA). On behalf of the Association, we thank you for the opportunity to speak here on the Changes to Food Licencing Procedure.

The recent changes to the food business licensing procedures require applicants for new business licences or for the transfer of business licences to confirm that their premises under application are free of unauthorised building works (UBWs) and comply with Government lease conditions and statutory plan restrictions.

Our comments on the new arrangements are as follows:

1. We are supportive of measures to remove UBWs but believe that the Government needs to determine a priority based action plan based on the UBWs which pose the greatest risk to public safety.
2. It is unclear why the Government is focusing only on the removal of UBWs at "food premises" with no explanation of its measures to remove UBWs at other premises. We request the Government to provide further information on its current policy in this regard.
3. The new arrangements result in more administration, cost, and complexity, and will extend the time for the licensing processing, all of which are contrary to the Government's objective of simplifying the licensing system.
4. Procedures for approving Building Works extending from a licenced premises should be streamlined to facilitate the reduction of such UBW's.

5. Clarification is required on the interpretation of the definition of building works and hence UBWs. We recommend that the Buildings Department should more clearly define categories of UBWs. Furthermore, for professional liability reasons, APs must work to clearly defined guidelines as to what constitutes a UBW to avoid potential areas of uncertainty. We believe that the focus of Government should be on the removal of the UBW's that pose the highest risk to public safety.
6. The licensee may not control structures that "are attached to or extend from the premises". We seek clarification from the government on what is meant by this phrase and how a licensee can control the removal of UBWs that do not form part of the leased premises.
7. The self-declaration that the operation of the food business at the premises is in compliance with Government lease conditions and statutory plan restrictions should be qualified by the knowledge of the applicant (i.e "as far as the applicant is aware").

**Philippe Giard**

**Chairman**

**Government Regulations Sub-Committee**

**Hong Kong Retail Management Association**

(key spokesman representing HKRMA on the subject)

The Hong Kong Retail Management Association (HKRMA) was founded in 1983 and is the major association representing Hong Kong's retail industry. For the past 22 years, the Association has played a vital role with a long term mission to promote the retail industry, to present a unified voice and lobby on issues that affect all retailers. The Association facilitates the exchange of information on issues common to the industry and aims to raise the status and professionalism of retailing through education and training.

The Association's current membership represents over 500 major retail chains covering more than 5,000 retail outlets and employing two-thirds of the total retail workforce in Hong Kong. Member organizations are engaged in various types of retail business ranging from department stores to supermarkets, convenience stores, drug stores, food, fashion and accessories, specialty stores as well as suppliers, wholesalers and industry related service organizations.