

July 2007
For information

Progress Report

On the Motion Debate on “Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation” at the Legislative Council on 14 March 2007

On 14 March 2007, the Legislative Council (LegCo) carried the motion moved by the Hon Audrey EU, “that this Council notes the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation which was published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 20 of 2007 and laid on the table of the Legislative Council on 28 February 2007.”

To improve the air quality of the Pearl River Delta Region, the HKSAR Government and Guangdong Provincial Government reached a consensus in 2002 to substantially reduce the emissions of four major pollutants by 2010 on a best endeavour basis. Amongst them, the reduction level for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) is 55% (with 1997 as the base year).

By 2005 we had already achieved a 26% reduction on the local emission of VOCs. The Government made the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation (hereunder “the Regulation”) for the purpose of controlling the VOC contents of paints, printing inks and consumer products, which were hitherto not subject to regulatory control. The Regulation adopts the standards of California of the US, which are currently the most stringent ones internationally, as the statutory maximum limits on VOCs in regulated products.

The Environmental Protection Department has been implementing the Regulation in phases since 1 April 2007. We will continue to monitor closely the situation to ensure that the Regulation is effectively enforced in line with the policy intent of reducing VOC emissions. We anticipate that when fully implemented, the Regulation can reduce about 8,000 tonnes of VOCs. It will also bring Hong Kong to the forefront of VOC control in the world.

After the Government tabled the Regulation at LegCo, LegCo had

formed subcommittees to scrutinize it, offering many valuable opinions. Subsequently, the Authority also made certain technical amendments to the original regulation. In response to Members' request, we will conduct a review, within one year after the Regulation has come into operation and after having gathered relevant experience, on the adequacy of the resources for enforcing the Regulation, the need to impose liability on retailers and the appropriateness of the VOC limit for flat coatings.

Environment Bureau

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