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香港特別行政區政府
商務及經濟發展局
工商及旅遊科



COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TOURISM BRANCH
COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT BUREAU
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12 October 2007

Miss Erin Tsang
Clerk to Panel on Commerce and Industry
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong
By Fax : 2869 6794

Dear Miss Tsang,

**Panel on Commerce and Industry
Meeting on 17 July 2007**

At the meeting of the Panel on Commerce and Industry held on 17 July 2007, the Administration undertook to provide (i) the vacancy rate of factory premises in Hong Kong; and (ii) response to a Member's request to review the licensing policy in respect of ice cream vendors. As these matters fall under the purview of the Housing Department/ Rating and Valuation Department and the Food and Health Bureau, we have consulted them accordingly.

Vacancy rate of factory premises

At present, there are 10 factory estates under the Housing Authority (HA). Excluding those old factory buildings which are soon to be demolished and hence which vacant units are no longer re-let, the HA provides more than 8,200 units, with total internal floor area of over 200,000 square metres. As at 31 August 2007, the overall utilisation rate of HA's factory buildings was 97%.

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According to the Rating and Valuation Department, as at end 2006, there was more than 17 million square metres internal floor area in private flatted factories, with occupancy rate at 93%.

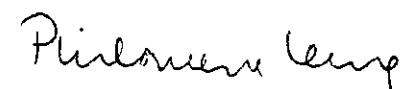
Licensing policy in respect of ice cream vendors

We have consulted the Food and Health Bureau on the issuance of Itinerant Hawker Licence (Frozen Confectionery) (i.e. ice cream vendors). The former Urban Council announced a new arrangement on 17 March 1993, whereby new Itinerant Hawker Licence (Frozen Confectionery) (IHL(FC)) would cease to be issued from the same day to tie in with the policy to phase out all Itinerant Hawker Licences (IHL). IHL holders who surrender their licences have the options of receiving an ex-gratia payment of \$30,000 or selecting either a vacant fixed pitch or a stall in public markets with concessionary rental arrangements. Since then, a number of IHL holders have surrendered their licences to the Government.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) met with representatives of the Dairy Products Beverage and Food Industries Employees Union in March 2007 to listen to their views regarding the request for issue of new IHL(FC) and undertook to conduct a comprehensive review on the matter. The representatives of the Food and Health Bureau and FEHD further explained the government's stance at the case conference on the matter on 28 September 2007.

As the re-issue of any type of hawker licences invariably impinges on Government's overall hawker policy, the Government would need to take the interests and views of the community at large into careful consideration. The Food and Health Bureau and FEHD will consult the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene and the trade on the issue in due course.

Yours sincerely,


(Mrs Philomena Leung)

for Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development