



HONG KONG PROFESSIONAL SIGN MAKER
ASSOCIATION LIMITED

香港專業廣告牌製作協會有限公司

1/F., Woo Sing Kee Industrial Building, 138 Wai Yip Street,
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Tel : (852) 27933488 Fax : (852) 21559792

18th January 2008

LET60109-2

Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building,
8 Jackson Road,
Central,
Hong Kong.

Attn: Hon KWONG Chi-kin (Chairman)

Dear Sirs,

Re: Bills Committee on Buildings (Amendment) Bill 2007
Invitation for submission

We refer to your letter dated 27th December 2007 inviting us for submission in regard to the captioned matter. We are grateful for your kind invitation.

Our members had participated in numerous meetings held by government departments for the purpose of scrutinizing the monitoring system in connection with those outdoor advertising billboards and signage since three decades ago. Through the guide of government officials and co-operation of the advertising sector, advertising billboards in Hong Kong gradually became famous and eventually gained the reputation of the “Pearl of Orient”. Most precious is strong self-discipline from industry and as a result the safety factors of all the advertising billboards are extremely high. Not even one single incident happened over the past many years due to unsecured structure of these advertising billboards. On occasions of structure falling from height, it likely occurred among those minor works as well as those abundant shop signs or air-conditioners during typhoon period.

The present Building Ordinance was formed through numerous amendments in the past. Prior to this century, all advertising billboards and signage, other than those erected in private properties, whichever projected to the street would be considered “unauthorized”. It



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was because at that juncture no legislation had empowered the government departments to grant approval to these sorts of structure. According to the present standard all of them were “illegal”. At that time even no occupation to the street/public place, the related applications had to go through seven government departments for approval. A duration of approximately three months was essential as far as application process was concerned. Two years ago our government began to adopt new procedures i.e., by introducing BA8 (Consent Letter) and PNAP269 (Fast Track Application) which had significantly shortened the time required for process of the application. Our industry has high commendation to these new procedures.

In regard to advertising billboards which helped Hong Kong in achieving the goodwill of “Pear of Orient”, colossal numbers of these structures were erected before the legislative amendments came to light. By then the government allowed these advertising billboards to be installed without causing interference of any kind. The legislative amendment happened subsequently had deprived their legal right. Such amendments had caused all advertising billboards erected at early stage to be illegal. At the beginning the Building Department only penalized those new erected advertising billboards, or those appeared to have obvious threat and risky to our lives and property, or those unauthorized signage with imminent danger.

Building Department had on 10th May 2004 issued a letter to our Association. The letter stated that “For those erected signage, our Department will assign staffs to attend for regular visit, thus to ensure the structure of those signage are safe and secure. In the event if we find lack of repair or among to dangerous situation, we shall issue orders, requesting the owner of the signage to dismantle, remove or repair the endangered signage at a reasonable time. On the other hand, for the safety of public, we had, since March 2003, appointed contract works consultants to maintain strong surveillance to those building works that violated the legislation. Should we discover violation works (including signage), dismantle orders will be issued to get rid of the works, prosecution to be implemented against those participants will also be considered. We shall cause more effort of inspection in those areas where advertising billboards are numbers, and to dismantle those huge advertising billboards that had potential risky.



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However, the Building Department is inclined to issue dismantle order to all advertising billboards which approval had not been sought (including those advertising billboards that erected and tolerated by government before the amended legislation came into effect) for the reason of “unauthorized structure”. This had cause great annoyance to our industry.

As we have mentioned earlier, the safety factor of the advertising billboards in Hong Kong is extremely high. In the event if dismantle is mandatory and submission for installation at a later stage, this will cause a very substantial waste of source. Furthermore numerous problems may occur during construction period, including creation of nuisance and possible danger to public. All these are result of “avoidable” procedure.

To tackle the aforesaid problems arising from the advertising billboards, our Association now submits two options for consideration:

1. Allow the owners to retain those existing advertising billboards, the owners are required to submit annual inspection report to ensure the structures are in a safe and secure condition.
2. The owners of the advertising billboards are permitted to submit inspection report that furnished by the structural engineer, thus causing the advertising billboards to be legalize so as to avoid the dismantling and rebuild procedure.

We humbly submit the above for consideration and acceptance by members of the Bills Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Mak Siu Tong
Chairman