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Advisory Council on the Environment

Views on the Product Eco-responsibility Bill

The Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) strongly supports the early enactment of the Product Eco-responsibility Bill, which will provide a legal framework for implementing producer responsibility schemes (PRSs) in Hong Kong. The ACE also supports the phased introduction of an environmental levy on plastic shopping bags at the retail level through the Product Eco-responsibility Bill to address the serious indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags.

2. The ACE has deliberated the “Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)” and the proposed PRSs therein on various occasions and agrees that –

- (a) PRS is an effective tool for waste reduction, recovery and recycling, and has been implemented successfully overseas;
- (b) PRS is in line with the principle of “polluter-pays”; and manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers should all share their “eco-responsibility” of reducing, recovering and recycling the products they produce, sell or use so as to minimize the environmental impact;
- (c) with regard to the environmental levy on plastic shopping bags, the Council supports the Administration's proposed scheme, which would go a long way not only in terms of addressing the problem of indiscriminate use, but also in terms of educating the public on their “eco-responsibility”;
- (d) the Council encourages the Administration to review the proposed scheme in a year's time, and consideration then should be given to extending the scheme to other retail outlets so as to realize more environmental benefits and foster a level-playing field in the affected business sector;

- (e) the Administration should continue with the voluntary effort on plastic shopping bag reduction, especially at retailers not yet covered by the scheme; and
- (f) the Council urges the Administration and the Legislative Council to work together to enact the Bill as soon as practicable.