

Revised version

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 842/07-08
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA/1

Panel on Environmental Affairs

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Tuesday, 8 January 2008, at 8:30 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP (Chairman)
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yea, GBS, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Anson CHAN, GBM, JP
- Members attending** : Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yea, GBS, JP
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
- Members absent** : Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
- Public officers attending** : **For item I**

Dr H Y YEUNG
Acting Assistant Director/Water Policy
Environmental Protection Department

Mr David CHAN
Officer-in-charge
(Water Policy Coordination)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr W TSUI
Assistant Director/Projects & Developments
Drainage Services Department

Mr T K LEE
Chief Engineer/Sewerage Projects
Drainage Services Department

For item II

Mr Carlson KS CHAN
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3)

Mr Benny WONG
Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Air
Policy)

Mr W C MOK
Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Mobile
Source Control)
Environmental Protection Department

**Attendance by
invitation**

: For Item II

The Kowloon Taxi Owners Association Ltd

Mr YUM Tai-ping
Chairman

Tai Wo Motors Ltd

Mr Aaron NG
Vice-Chairman

Hong Kong Association of Aircargo Truckers Ltd

Mr Richard TSANG
Chairman

Right Hand Drive Motors Association Ltd

Mr Paul LAW
Founder Chairman

United Friendship Taxi Owners and Drivers Association Ltd

Mr LEUNG Chak-sang
Chairman

Organization of Hong Kong Drivers

Mr IP Wai-chi
Chairman

Public Light Bus General Association

Mr LING Chi-keung
Chairman

New Territories Taxi Drivers' Right Alliance

Mr LEUNG Yee-weng
Chairman

The Taxi Operators Association Ltd

Mr LEUNG Shiu-cheong
Chairman

China Hong Kong and Macau Boundary Crossing Bus Association

Mr CHAN Chun-yee
General-Secretary

Public Omnibus Operators Association Ltd

Mr Peter MOK
Secretary-General

Hong Kong Container Tractor Owner Association

Mr CHAN Fu-chuen
Director

Transport and Logistics Workers Union

Mr TAM Wai-to
President

Tsuen Wan District Tourists and Passengers Omnibus
Operators Association

Mr CHENG Man-kin
Committee Member

N.W. Area Taxi Drivers and Operators Association

Mr WONG Wing-chung
Chairman

汽車交通運輸業總工會公共小巴分會

Mr AU YEUNG Ming
Director

Lam Tin Wai Hoi Public Light Bus Association

Mr NGAI Chor
Chairman

Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi Lorry & Owners' Association Ltd

Mr WONG Po-keung
Vice Chairman

Association of Engineering Professionals in Society Ltd

Ir YIM Kin-ping
Senior Vice Chairman

The Conservancy Association

Dr HUNG Wing-tat
Director

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Ir Peter WONG
Vice President

Sun Hing Taxi Radio Service General Association

Mr CHAN Wai-ming
President

Quality Driver Training Centre Ltd

Mr Stephen CHENG
Chairman

Kowloon Truck Merchants Association Ltd

Mr LEUNG Kun-kuen
Chairman

Hong Kong Society of Articulated Vehicle Driving
Instructors Ltd

Mr TANG Poon-kun
President

The Hong Kong Taxi and Public Light Bus Association Ltd

Mr CHIU Sui-fai
Director

Kowloon Motor Driving Instructors' Association Ltd

Mr CHEUNG Tai-wa
Salary Director

Democratic Alliance for Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong

Mr Ricky WONG
Deputy Spokesman on Environmental Policies

Hong Kong Automobile Association

Mr Wesley WAN
President

Association for the Rights of Taxi Drivers

Mr Andy LI
President

N.T. Operations Union

Mr CHAN Shu-sang
Chairman

Taxi Dealers and Owners Association Ltd

Mr NG Kwan-sing
President

Hong Kong District Tourists and Passengers Omnibus
Operators Association

Mr David CHAN
Chairman

New Lantau Bus Co. (1973) Ltd

Mr WONG Wah
Administration Manager

Mini Spotters

Ms Annelise CONNELL
Spokesperson

Rights of Taxi Owner and Driver Association Ltd

Mr LAU Kim-wan
Chairman

Wai Yik H.K. Kln. and N.T. Taxi Owners Association Ltd

Mr LI Kwok-ying
Vice Chairman

Clerk in attendance : Miss Becky YU
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)4

I. Provision of sewerage facilities at Tai Po Tai Wo Road and Mang Kung Uk in Port Shelter

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(01) — Administration's paper on provision of sewerage facilities at Tai Po Tai Wo Road and Mang Kung Uk in Port Shelter)

The Assistant Director of Drainage Services (Projects & Developments) (AD/P&D, DSD) gave a power-point presentation on the proposed provision of sewerage facilities at Tai Po Tai Wo Road and Mang Kung Uk in Port Shelter.

2. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that the two sewerage projects would have the support of the District Councils as both were long awaited by the residents. Noting that there were villages in the vicinity of Tai Wo Road and Mang Kung Uk which had yet to be provided with sewerage connections, he enquired about the timetable for the completion of sewerage network for these unsewered villages. AD/P&D said that a number of sewerage projects were being concurrently implemented by the Drainage Services Department (DSD) for the unsewered villages in Lam Tsuen. While the main trunk sewer in Lam Tsuen was expected to be completed in 2011, planning for other sewerage projects in the vicinity, such as 332 DS, was already at the stage of public consultation. At members' request, the Administration undertook to provide information on the latest progress of delivery of related sewerage projects for the unsewered villages in the vicinity of Tai Wo Road and Mang Kung Uk.

Admin

3. Ms Emily LAU supported the early completion of the sewerage projects for the unsewered villages given the sound fiscal situation of the Government. These projects would also allow for the creation of the needed employment opportunities for the construction industry. In this connection, the Administration was requested to provide a list of sewerage projects for all the unsewered villages, their expected schedules for completion and the latest progress. As regards the proposed provision of the pumping station at Tai Po Tai Wo Road, Ms LAU agreed that greening measures should be put in place to improve the aesthetics of the surrounding area. Given that the pumping station might be a source of noise nuisance, she asked if the neighbouring residents were made aware of the proposed provision. AD/P&D said that DSD had been in consultation with the neighbouring villagers for over a year on the provision of pumping station at Tai Po Tai Wo Road, and they had expressed agreement to the pumping station location. In the course of consultation, the location of the pumping station had been adjusted in response to the villagers' views. Efforts would continue to be made to improve the aesthetics of the pumping station. At members' request, the Administration undertook to include in the paper to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) the outcome of consultation on the proposed pumping station near Tai Po Tau Shui Wai with the villagers and the efforts made to address their concerns. Ms LAU enquired why there was no pumping station proposed at Mang Kung Uk. AD/P&D said that the Mang Kung Uk was on a higher location where collected sewage could be conveyed to the existing sewer at Tseung Kwan O.

Admin

Admin

4. Mr Howard YOUNG supported the improvements to be made to the unsewered villages. He enquired about the arrangements for the connection of sewage pipes in Lam Tsuen villages to the main sewerage network. AD/P&D said that under 332 DS project, the sewage from the villages in Lam Tsuen would be collected and conveyed through the sewage pipes to the sewerage network. As regards the flow of Lam Tsuen River, the Acting AD/Water Policy said that the water from the River would enter the Tolo Harbour. Given that the project would improve the water quality of Lam Tsuen River which might be used for potable water supply, Mr YOUNG reiterated his support to the project.

5. In concluding, members did not indicate objection to the proposal being submitted to PWSC for consideration in mid February 2008.

II. Public consultation on banning idling vehicles with running engines

6. In view of the overwhelming response from the trades to attend the meeting, the Chairman said that it had been decided that requests from parties which had only approached the Secretariat the day before the meeting would not be entertained. Instead, they had been requested to submit written views. Notwithstanding, she asked if members would agree to hold another special meeting to receive public views given the far-reaching implications of the proposed ban on idling vehicles with running engines. Members agreed to hold another meeting on Wednesday, 16 January 2008, from 8:30 am to 10:00 am.

Meeting with The Kowloon Taxi Owners Association Ltd

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(02) — Joint submission from The Kowloon Taxi Owners Association Ltd, United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd and Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners' Association Ltd)

7. Mr YUM Tai-ping, Chairman, said that the proposed ban could not reduce vehicular emissions, and that there would be difficulties in implementing the ban as drivers would switch off their engines when they saw enforcement officers approaching. It was also not operationally feasible to limit the exemptions to the first two taxis at a taxi stand. To comply with the proposed ban, the third taxi and others waiting in line would need to switch on and off their engines frequently while they were waiting. This would adversely affect the batteries and starters and shorten their lifespan. Therefore, he would call for the Administration to exempt taxis from the proposed ban.

Meeting with Tai Wo Motors Ltd

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(03))

8. Mr Aaron NG, Vice-Chairman, echoed that taxi drivers, particularly for those waiting in line at taxi stands, would need to frequently switch off and restart their

engines in order to comply with the ban. As there might be limit to which an engine could be switched off and restarted, he requested the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to conduct a study on the impact of frequent ignition on engine performance.

Meeting with Hong Kong Association of Aircargo Truckers Ltd

9. Mr Richard TSANG, Chairman, said that he supported measures to be put in place to educate the public on the need to switch off engines while idling, but he would strongly object to the imposition of a statutory ban on idling vehicles as it would have adverse impact on the operation of certain vehicles, such as aircargo truckers, if they were required to switch off their engines while queuing.

Meeting with Right Hand Drive Motors Association Ltd

10. Mr Paul LAW, Founder Chairman, said that while the Association was supporting the control on idling vehicles with running engines in principle, there were a number of issues which had to be considered before implementing the control -

- (a) exemption should be granted when the ambient temperature reached a specified level;
- (b) drivers and passengers who were able to submit medical proofs that they could not tolerate hot weather due to health problems should be allowed to keep their engines on while idling; and
- (c) exemption should be granted to certain types of vehicles with a genuine need to keep engines idling for operational reasons.

Meeting with United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd

11. Mr LEUNG Chak-sang, Chairman, said that while the United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd would support measures to protect the environment, it would have reservations on the proposed ban. He pointed out that the need to frequently switch off and restart engines in order to comply with the ban would generate more emissions, shorten the lifespan of starters and car batteries and increase the operating cost of the taxi trade. The frequent restarting of engines might also lead to engine breakdown, resulting in more traffic problems. He requested that taxis should be exempted from the ban.

Meeting with Organization of Hong Kong Drivers

12. Mr IP Wai-chi, Chairman, said that Hong Kong should not take the lead in introducing the statutory ban on idling engines as this would inevitably give rise to a lot of unrest and complaints which would not be conducive to developing a people-based governance. Instead, measures should be mapped out to educate the public on the need to switch off engines while idling.

Meeting with Public Light Bus General Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 319/07-08(01))

13. Mr LING Chi-keung, Chairman, said that while the Association would support measures to protect the environment, it could not accept the proposed ban on idling vehicles in the absence of detailed guidelines on the ban. He pointed out that it would be difficult to define which public light buses (PLBs) at a PLB stand should be allowed to keep their engines on given that there were PLBs of different routes all waiting in queues. He also cautioned that the frequent switching on and off of engines would lead to extensive wear and tear, resulting in engine breakdown which would give rise to more traffic problems.

Meeting with New Territories Taxi Drivers' Right Alliance

14. Mr LEUNG Yee-weng, Chairman, said that the need to frequently switch off and restart engines in order to comply with the ban would generate more emissions, shorten the lifespan of starters and car batteries, resulting in an increase in such waste to be disposed of at landfills. As such practices were not environmental friendly at all, it was not considered worthy to pursue control on idling vehicles with running engines. Besides, drivers of tourist and public buses would need to keep their engines running to maintain their air-conditioning for the comfort of passengers, particularly in hot weather. This was particularly so in times of rainy weather, when the windows could not be opened. He requested that a study should be made on the impact of frequent switching on and off of engines on the lifespan of batteries.

Meeting with The Taxi Operators Association Ltd

15. Mr LEUNG Shiu-cheong, Chairman, said that the taxi trade had all along been committed to protecting the environment as evidenced by the switch to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) taxi. However, it seemed that the environmental performance of LPG taxi was not as environment friendly as what was advocated by the Administration in view of the proposed ban. He pointed out that the frequent switching on and off of air-conditioning would result in significant temperature changes which might have impact on the health of drivers. Therefore, a statutory ban on idling vehicles with running engines was not recommended for the safety and comfort of passengers.

Meeting with China Hongkong and Macau Boundary Crossing Bus Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(06))

16. Mr CHAN Chun-ye, General-Secretary, said that while the Association would support measures to control idling engines, it held the view bus drivers would have difficulties in complying with the proposed ban, particularly for those buses with fixed windows. The drivers would have no choice but to keep their engines running while idling to keep the air-conditioning on for the comfort of passengers. As such, consideration should be given to exempting buses with fixed windows from the ban if there were passengers on board.

Meeting with Public Omnibus Operators Association Ltd
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(07))

17. Mr Peter MOK, Secretary-General, said that there were a number of technical issues which had to be resolved before implementing the proposed ban on idling vehicles with running engines. As public buses provided service to the entire community, he would support that exemptions should be granted to buses with passengers on board.

Meeting with Hong Kong Container Tractor Owner Association

18. Mr CHAN Fu-chuen, Director, said that while the Association was in support of measures to protect the environment, it was concerned about the adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed ban since frequent switching on and off of engines might generate more emissions. It would also increase the operating costs as a result of the wear and tear of starters and batteries as well as the possible conflict between drivers and enforcement officers. Before implementing the ban, publicity should be stepped up to improve public awareness on the need to control idling engines. Exemptions should be granted to certain locations and vehicle types which required to keep their engines running while idling. There should also be clear guidelines for the enforcement of the ban.

Meeting with Transport & Logistics Workers Union
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(08))

19. Mr TAM Wai-to, President, said that the Union supported measures to protect the environment, but questioned the effectiveness of the proposed ban on idling vehicles with running engines. He pointed out that as opposed to vehicular emissions, pollutants from the Mainland were indeed the major source of air pollution. Therefore, the proposed ban would not achieve significant improvements to air quality. He was also concerned about the conflict which might arise between drivers and traffic wardens in enforcing the ban as well as the health impact on passengers if the air-conditioning had to be switched off while idling. He therefore urged the Administration not to use legislative means to control idling engines.

Meeting with Tsuen Wan District Tourists and Passengers Omnibus Operators Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(04))

20. Mr CHENG Man-kin, Committee Member, said that the imposition of the proposed ban would undermine the operation of tourist buses. It would also cause inconvenience to bus operators and discomfort to passengers since most of the buses were installed with fixed windows which could not be opened. In times of hot weather, the temperature inside bus cabins could be as high as 65°C without air-conditioning. Passengers would suffer from heat strokes if exposed to such extreme temperatures. In order to maintain an optimum temperature of 26°C, there was a need to turn on the air-conditioning for 15 minutes before boarding of passengers.

The proposed ban would discourage tourists from visiting Hong Kong as they might not be able to withstand the discomfort without air-conditioning while vehicles were idling, particularly during the hot summer months. It was hoped that exemptions could be granted to tourist buses and omnibuses with passengers on board.

Meeting with N. W. Area Taxi Drivers & Operators Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(09))

21. Mr WONG Wing-chung, Chairman, said that the Association was strongly opposed to the imposition of a statutory ban on idling vehicles with running engines. As taxis were meant to provide a fast and comfortable way of travel, the proposed ban would give rise to discomfort and discourage passengers from traveling on taxis. It would also reduce the competitiveness of taxis as a means of transport and undermine the operation of the taxi trade. Given that the environmental performance of taxis had been much improved following the switch to the use of LPG, he urged that consideration should be given to exempting taxis from the ban.

Meeting with 汽車交通運輸業總工會公共小巴分會

22. Mr AU YEUNG Ming, Director, said that drivers would support measures to improve roadside air quality as most of them had to spent more than nine hours per day on the roads. However, the proposed ban was not acceptable on account of the inconvenience it would bring to drivers. He also criticized the Administration for exaggerating the effects of emissions from idling vehicles with running engines. Given that there were only 501 complaints on idling engines in 2006, this would not justify the introduction of the ban. He said that the Association would object to the proposed ban.

Meeting with Lam Tin Wai Hoi Public Light Bus Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(10))

23. Mr NGAI Chor, Chairman, said that while the Association would support measures to protect the environment, it held the view that the proposed ban would not be able to improve the air quality but might give rise to even more emissions instead. By way of illustration, if PLBs at PLB stands were to comply with the ban which only provided exemption to the first two PLBs, the third bus and others waiting in line would need to switch off and restart engines every time they moved forward. This would generate even more emissions when compared with idling vehicles with running engines. The frequent switching off and restarting engines might also result in the breakdown of vehicles. Therefore, the Association considered that the ban should not apply to the PLB trade.

Meeting with Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners' Association Ltd
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(11))

24. Mr WONG Po-keung, Vice Chairman, said that the Association was supportive of measures to protect the environment as evidenced by the switch to LPG

taxis. However, it did not agree that the proposed ban would improve the air quality. Given the long queues of taxis waiting at taxi stands, the frequent switching off and restarting of engines to comply with the ban would result in more emissions than idling vehicles with running engines. Besides, in times of hot weather when the ambient temperature was close to 40°C, there was a need to turn on the engines for a while before the cabin could achieve an optimum temperature for the comfort of passengers. Taxi drivers would also need to keep the air-conditioning on when raining to reduce condensation which would fog the glass panels within the enclosed cabin, thereby affecting driving safety. Therefore, the Association urged the Administration to permanently exempt taxis from the ban.

Meeting with Association of Engineering Professionals in Society Ltd
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(12))

25. Ir YIM Kin-ping, Senior Vice Chairman, said that there was a need to impose a ban on idling vehicles with running engines since there were many drivers who would tend to turn on the air-conditioning for their own comfort while vehicles were idling. The proposed ban would reduce roadside pollution, protect public health and promote public awareness on the need to switching off idling engines. The proposal was a part of the Blue Skies Campaign and was in line with sustainability principles. A cleaner environment with better air quality would certainly attract more visitors and invite more overseas investments. He nevertheless agreed to the need for exemptions for certain types of vehicles with operational needs.

Meeting with The Conservancy Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(13))

26. Dr HUNG Wing-tat, Director, said that emissions from idling vehicles would aggravate roadside pollution and thus affecting the health of people, in particular those who have to work long periods by the roadside. The problem was further exacerbated by the tower building blocks by the roadside which hindered the dispersion of vehicle exhaust emissions. There was a need to introduce legislation to prevent drivers from leaving air-conditioning on just for their own comfort while vehicles were idling.

Meeting with The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE)
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(14))

27. Ir Peter WONG, Vice President, said that while HKIE would welcome measures to improve air quality, it did not support the proposed ban for the following reasons -

- (a) there was no evidence to suggest that emissions from idling vehicles with running engines had posed a serious problem which would justify the need for the introduction of a statutory ban;

- (b) there were practical difficulties in implementing the ban since certain types of engines would require idling time during starting and switching off;
- (c) if the proposal would allow an offender to dispute liability for contravention in a magistrate court after receiving a fixed penalty ticket on the spot, it would be promulgating the preference of rule of law instead of the rule of law; and
- (d) vehicle emissions could be more effectively reduced with the use of more environment-friendly fuels and reduced air-conditioning.

He also pointed out that the Singapore experience was not relevant to Hong Kong since there were ample parking spaces in Singapore and its urban design was different from that of Hong Kong.

(Post-meeting note: In its letter to the Panel on 21 April 2008, HKIE indicated that while the record was essentially correct, the true context might be amiss by those readers who might not have the chance to review its complete submission. With members' agreement, the first sentence of paragraph 27 should read "While HKIE would welcome measures to improve air quality, including the statutory ban to require idling engines to be switched off, it did not support the proposed summary ban on an all-year-round, 24 hours a day and territory-wide basis without gapping provisions for the following reasons".)

Meeting with Sun Hing Taxi Radio Service General Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(15))

28. Mr CHAN Wai-ming, President, said that the Association was opposed to the imposition of the proposed ban across the board. He said that the ban would threaten the survival of the taxi trade.

Meeting with Quality Driver Training Centre Ltd

29. Mr Stephen CHENG, Chairman, said that he would support a multi-pronged approach to improve air quality. The proposed ban would be an effective measure as it would prevent drivers from keeping air-conditioning on for their own comfort while their engines were idling. Notwithstanding, he held the view that the ban could be lifted during the period from July to September given the hot weather. To minimize the impacts of the ban, consideration should be given to exempting taxis, PLBs, tourist buses, emergency vehicles and vehicles which were required to run their engines for some ancillary purposes. Vehicle manufacturers should be requested to provide more environment-friendly models which would assist in the reduction of emissions.

Meeting with Kowloon Truck Merchants Association Ltd

30. Mr LEUNG Kun-kuen, Chairman, said that the Association would support the implementation of the proposed ban since trucks emitted significant amounts of particulates even when idling. He also supported that exemptions should be granted to taxis, PLBs and trucks with ancillary engines on account of their operational needs. He pointed out that there were certain types of engines, such as turbo engines, which genuinely required idling time during starting and switching off.

Meeting with Hong Kong Society of Articulated Vehicle Driving Instructors Ltd

31. Mr TANG Poon-kun, President, said that he would support the control on idling vehicles with running engines.

Meeting with The Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Ltd

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(18))

32. Mr CHIU Sui-fai, Director, said that the Association would support the proposed ban, but strongly object to its application to taxis and PLBs because they were required to keep their air-conditioning on for the comfort of passengers. They would lose their competitiveness if they failed to do so. The Association therefore urged that consideration should be given to exempting taxis and PLBs from the ban.

Meeting with Kowloon Motor Driving Instructors' Association Ltd

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(19))

33. Mr CHEUNG Tai-wa, Salary Director, said that the Association considered that exemptions should be granted for learners under training as their learning would be affected if they were required to often switch off and restart the engines during driving lessons. He also supported that exemptions should be granted to taxis, PLBs, public buses, tourist buses etc to take into account their operational needs.

Meeting with Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB)

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(20))

34. Mr Ricky WONG, Deputy Spokesman on Environmental Policies, said that DAB would support the proposed ban on idling vehicles with running engines. However, the ban would need to be implemented flexibly to take into account operational needs. Exemptions should be granted to emergency vehicles and vehicles which were required to keep their engines running for some ancillary purposes. He also appreciated that there were difficulties in enforcing the ban at taxi and PLB stands because the frequent switching off and restarting of engines would accelerate the wear and tear of starters and batteries and thus increasing the maintenance costs. DAB would support the implementation of a trial study on the proposed ban in areas such as schools and hospitals as well as the imposition of a fixed penalty of \$320 for non-compliances. It also accepted that violations should

not be based on how long an idling engine had kept its engine running as this would create an intractable enforcement problem and could lead to disputes between the law enforcement officers and drivers.

Meeting with Hong Kong Automobile Association

35. Mr Wesley WAN, President, said that drivers would tend to switch off their engines of their vehicles while idling given the high cost of fuel. He supported that efforts should be made to educate the public on the need to switch off their idling engines to make this a responsibility and a practice. A trial study on the proposed ban should be implemented near schools and hospitals during the period from November to April. There was also a need for consultation with the affected trades on the implementation details of the ban.

Meeting with Association for the Rights of Taxi Drivers

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(22))

36. Mr Andy LI, President, said that the Association was concerned that enforcement problems would arise in the absence of guidelines on how long an engine was considered being kept idling, leading to disputes between law enforcement officers and drivers. He also pointed out that the proposed ban had not taken into account the views of the taxi trade expressed during the consultation in 2000/2001. The Association would urge for exemptions to be given to taxis, PLBs and public buses.

Meeting with N. T. Taxi Operations Union

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(23))

37. Mr CHAN Shu-sang, Chairman, questioned the effectiveness of the proposed ban in improving air quality when there were no corresponding efforts by the Mainland to protect the environment. He was concerned that with the implementation of the ban, each taxi might have its engine switched off and restarted for about 500 times each day or 15 000 times a month. This would lead to extensive wear and tear of starters and batteries, particularly in respect of LPG taxis when their performance under such conditions had yet to be tested out. The maintenance and hence the operating cost of taxis would increase as a result. Furthermore, taxi drivers might not be able to withstand the high temperature within the cabin if they were not allowed to turn on the air-conditioning during the hot summer months. The temperature differences arising from the frequent turning on and off of air-conditioning might also have impact on the health of drivers as they would be more prone to diseases. Therefore, the Union was opposed to the proposed ban and would request that the consultation period be extended to September 2008 when LegCo Members and the Administration could be invited to the taxi stands to experience the actual operation of taxis under hot weather.

Meeting with Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Ltd
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(24))

38. Mr NG Kwan-sing, President, said that the taxi trade was supportive of the need to protect the environment as evidenced by the switch to LPG taxis. As the proposed ban was not well thought out, he was concerned that it would give rise to compliance difficulty on the part of taxi drivers if the ban was applied territory-wide. He therefore urged for the Administration to grant exemption for the taxi trade.

Meeting with Hong Kong District Tourists and Passengers Omnibus Operators Association
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(25))

39. Mr David CHAN, Chairman said that there were practical difficulties for tourist and passenger omnibus operators to comply with the ban. This was because most tourist buses operated on turbo engines which required an idling time of about five minutes during starting and switching off. Furthermore, as the windows of some tourist buses were fixed, the temperature inside the bus could reach as high as 60 °C in summer. To allow for the comfort of passengers, air-conditioning had to be turned on for 20 minutes before the boarding of passengers. He considered it necessary for the Administration to take account the interests of the affected trades before implementing the ban. He also requested that exemptions should be granted to buses with passengers on board for the health and comfort of passengers.

Meeting with New Lantau Bus Co. (1973) Ltd

40. Mr WONG Wah, Administration Manager, said that the company was all along supportive of environmental measures and had invested about \$4 million on emission reduction devices. As most of the bus stands in Lantau were without cover, the temperature inside the bus could reach as high as 60 °C in summer. There was a need to turn on the air-conditioning for a considerable length of time before allowing passengers to board the bus. He would request that public buses be allowed an idling time of 15 minutes to turn on their air-conditioning before boarding of passengers.

Meeting with Mini Spotters
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(01))

41. Ms Annelise CONNELL, Spokesperson, said that the Mini Spotters was not an environmental group but a law enforcement group and traffic safety was its primary concern. She said that if there were sufficient police officers to enforce the existing traffic laws, idling engines would have been much reduced. However, the Police could not enforce the law unless it was amended to the effect that any idling could not be tolerated. By way of illustration, the two lanes of idling red minibuses with running engines which were illegally parked at Tung Choi Street would be gone if this was prohibited by law. She said that the Mini Spotters and the Clean Air Action Group would support the application of the ban to all vehicles. They would be conducting a survey on the impact of idling engines on public health. She agreed

that the Panel should hold another meeting so that affected parties, other than those from the transport trades, could attend.

Meeting with Rights of Taxi Owners and Drivers Association Ltd
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(30))

42. Mr LAU Kim-wan, Chairman, said that since taxis in Hong Kong were running on LPG, the air quality would not be adversely affected by their exhaust emissions which contained only minimal amounts of particulates. Hence, there might not be a need to require taxi drivers to switch off their idling engines. The frequent switching off and restarting engines in compliance with the ban would lead to extensive wear and tear and increase maintenance and operating costs. It would also cause a lot of inconvenience to the transport trades. He opined that the crux of the air quality problem stemmed from poor air circulation arising from the screening effect of buildings. There was also a need to reduce the emissions from power generation.

Meeting with Wai Yik HK, Kln & NT Taxi Owners Association Ltd

43. Mr LI Kwok-ying, Vice Chairman, said that he did not support the proposed ban. Apart from the ban, there were a host of other measures which could be imposed to improve air quality.

44. The Chairman also drew members' attention to the following submissions from deputations not attending the meeting –

- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(21) — Submission from The Democratic Party
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(26) — Submission from 九龍區旅運巴士同業聯會
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(02) — Further submission from 九龍區旅運巴士同業聯會
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(27) — Submission from Hong Kong Taxi Association
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(28) — Submission from The Hong Kong Union of Light Van Employees
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(29) — Submission from H.K. Vehicle Transportation Association
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(31) — Submission from Pak Kai Taxi Owners Association Ltd
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(32) — Submission from Green Sense
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(33) — Submission from Green Council
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(03) — Submission from Hong Kong Kowloon & N.T. Grab. Mounted Lorries Association Ltd
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(04) — Submission from Red Star Logistics Co Ltd

- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(05) — Submission from Ming Kee Container Transp. Co
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(06) — Submission from Sambo Transportation Co Ltd
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(07) — Submission from Jointyan Ltd
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(08) — Submission from Blooming Progress Ltd
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(09) — Submission from Taxi & PLB Concern Group

Meeting with the Administration

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(34) — Administration's response to members' concerns raised at the meeting on 26 November 2007
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(35) — Hon Miriam LAU's letter dated 4 December 2007 to the Administration
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(36) — Administration's response to LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(35)
- Ref: EP150/V6/2 — The Legislative Council Brief
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 283/07-08(03) — Administration's paper on public consultation on banning idling vehicles with running engines
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 283/07-08(04) — Paper on control of idling engines prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 319/07-08(02) — Submission from Hong Kong Waste Disposal Industry Association)

45. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3) (DDEP(3)) said that the Administration was aware of the transport trades' concern on the possible need to switch off and restart engines frequently in order to comply with the proposed ban. To this end, the Administration had proposed to exempt vehicles which stopped at the roadside for active boarding or alighting as well as the first two taxis/PLBs at taxis/PLB stands. Exemption would also be given to taxis and PLBs in a moving queue at their designated stands. As regards the trades' request of further extending the scope of exemptions to all taxis and PLBs waiting at their stands and tourist buses with turbo engines and fixed windows, and lifting the ban on rainy days and summer months, DDEP(3) said that all the views received during public consultation would be given due consideration. He stressed that as the proposal was meant to improve roadside air quality, the Administration had to carefully consider whether any of the suggestions for further extending the scope of exemptions was warranted in order not to defeat the purpose of the proposed ban. On the need to impose the ban on taxis which were already running on the more environment friendly LPG, DDEP(3) explained that the exhaust emissions from LPG taxis still contained pollutants and hence their engines should be switched off when idling. He added that a number of measures, including cross-boundary cooperation and imposition of emission caps on power generation, had been adopted to improve air quality and the proposed ban

aimed at improving roadside air quality.

46. Ms Miriam LAU said that the trades' main concern was the operational difficulties associated with the proposed ban rather than the need to keep the air-conditioning running for the comfort of drivers. If it was not the Administration's intention to require the trades to switch off and restart their engines frequently in order to comply with the ban, exemptions should be granted to meet their operational needs. It should also meet with the trades to resolve differences as far as possible, in particular regarding the exemptions for red minibuses at PLB stands. Noting from the HKIE's submission that engines would emit more emissions when first ignited because the catalytic converter had not been warmed up for efficient operation, and that some vehicles would require their idling engines to be running to enhance performance, Ms LAU expressed concern that more emissions would be generated from frequent switching off and restarting of engines than keeping the engines idling. That might also explain why vehicles subject to testing were required to run for a while before testing. There was also a study which confirmed that a turbo compressor engine should always be allowed to idle for a short period after starting. She therefore considered it necessary that studies should be made on the impacts of frequent switching off and restarting of engines on the performance of vehicles. The Administration should also study overseas experience in implementing the proposed ban as she noted that no enforcement action, apart from warning, had been taken by the Singaporean Government since the legislation to ban idling engines had been introduced in 1999. In England, warning on idling engines would be given prior to enforcement and she asked if this would apply to Hong Kong.

47. Ms Emily LAU thanked the deputations for their views. She said that the Administration should have taken steps to address the trades' concerns, such as the increase in maintenance cost arising from the frequent switching off and restarting of engines, before publishing the consultation document. She was also concerned about the health of those people who were working on the roadside, such as newspaper vendors, and considered it necessary to invite them to the next meeting to express their views as they were most affected by the poor roadside air quality. In this connection, the Administration was requested to provide more information on the health impacts of vehicular emissions.

Admin

48. Ms LEE Fung-ying acknowledged that there were practical difficulties for the trades to comply with the proposed ban on idling vehicles with running engines. Given that some buses were installed with fixed windows, there might be a need for bus companies to procure buses with windows that could be opened to reduce the reliance on air-conditioning. She also considered that vehicles providing non-emergency services to elderlies and handicapped persons as well as tourist buses awaiting the boarding of passengers should be exempted from the ban to allow for the comfort of passengers.

49. Ms CHOY So-yuk said that she would support the proposed ban albeit this might not be able to bring much improvement to air quality. She opined that there were a number of more effective measures to improve roadside air quality. One of

them was for the Government to acquire the two cross harbour tunnels which would significantly reduce traffic congestion. Apart from requiring taxis and PLBs to reduce emissions by switching off their idling engines, efforts should be made to solicit the cooperation of franchise buses. The ban, if implemented, should not cause a lot of inconvenience to the trades and guidelines should be made to avoid intractable enforcement problems. Reference should also be made to overseas experience in countries with hot summer months. She hoped that all such information could be provided to members before the next meeting.

50. Mr Howard YOUNG said that Members of the Liberal Party had all along supported the control on idling engines in an attempt to improve air quality. They were aware of the trades' concerns and accepted that exemptions should be granted as appropriate to take account of their operational needs. He said that there was a price to be paid for clean air and the increase in operating cost should not be an excuse for not making environmental improvements. Likewise, a certain degree of discomfort associated with the switching off of air-conditioning would have to be tolerated for the sake of the environment. While appreciating that there were operational needs to keep engines running while vehicles were idling, as in the case of tourist buses with fixed windows, he did not support that exemptions should be granted to all tourist buses at all times of the year. He said that the practice of some tourist bus drivers of turning on their air-conditioners for their own comfort while vehicles were idling should be banned. As the implementation details of the ban would be further discussed at the next meeting on 16 January 2008, he hoped that the transport trades should make use of the opportunity to exchange views with the Administration.

51. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was concerned whether there had been adequate consultation with the affected trades. He said that in implementing any legislation, there was a need to take account of the impact on the operation of the trades. He questioned the propriety of introducing the proposed ban when the trades were strongly opposed to it on account of its adverse impact on their operation. He enquired about the Administration's plans to address the trades' concerns. DDEP(3) said that the control on idling vehicles with running engines had been discussed in 2000/2001. Since the launching of the consultation document in November 2007, the Administration had maintained close liaison with the trades and held around 10 consultation meetings with them. The views collected during the consultation period, which would expire on 31 March 2008, would be collated and a proposal setting out the details of implementation would be worked out for consideration by the Legislative Council.

III. Any other business

52. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:45 am.