

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Follow-up to special meeting on 16 January 2008

Summary of views on the proposal to ban idling vehicles with running engines
(as at 30 January 2008)

Organization	Concern/View	Administration's comments
<p><u>Taxi & public light bus (PLB) associations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Territories Taxi Drivers' Right Alliance ● The Taxi Operators Association Ltd ● Public Light Bus General Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 319/07-08(01)) ● The Kowloon Taxi Owners Association Ltd ● United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers 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) ● N. W. Area Taxi Drivers & Operators Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(09)) ● Lam Tin Wai Hoi Public Light Bus Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(10)) ● Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners' Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(11)) ● Sun Hing Taxi Radio Service General Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(15)) ● Tuen Mun Public Light Bus Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(17)) 	<p>Taxi and PLB associations requested that taxis and PLBs should be exempted from the proposed ban on idling vehicles with running engines for the following reasons –</p> <p>(a) It was not operationally feasible to limit the exemptions to the first two taxis/PLBs at a taxi/PLB stand. To comply with the proposed ban, the third taxi and others waiting in line would need to switch on and restart their engines frequently while they were waiting, leading to extensive wear and tear of starters and more emissions. Besides, the performance of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) taxis/PLBs under such conditions had yet to be tested;</p> <p>(b) As taxis were meant to provide a fast and comfortable way of travel, the proposed ban would give rise to discomfort of passengers who would be reluctant to travel on taxis, thereby reducing the competitiveness of taxis as a means of transport and undermining the operation of the trade;</p> <p>(c) The frequent turning on and off of air-conditioning would result in significant temperature changes which might have impact</p>	<p>(a), (c) In the consultation paper, extensive exemptions have already been proposed to obviate the need for drivers to switch on and off their vehicle engines frequently. The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected when finalising the proposal.</p> <p>(b) The proposed ban will apply to all types of motor vehicles, not taxis alone.</p> <p>(e) The Administration will prepare clear enforcement guidelines for officers when enforcing the legislation.</p> <p>(f) The Administration has set a 5-month consultation period, which is much longer than the normal arrangement, to allow adequate time for consulting the public and stakeholders. The Administration sees no need to further extend the consultation.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(18)) ● Association for the Rights of Taxi Drivers (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(22)) ● N. T. Taxi Operations Union (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(23)) ● Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(24)) ● Hong Kong Taxi Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(27)) ● Rights of Taxi Owners and Drivers Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(30)) ● Wai Yik HK, Kln & NT Taxi Owners Association Ltd ● Pak Kai Taxi Owners Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(31)) ● Taxi & PLB Concern Group (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(09)) ● Urban Taxi Drivers Association Joint Committee Co Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 594/07-08(01)) 	<p>on the health of drivers, making them more prone to diseases;</p> <p>(d) There was a need for taxi/PLB drivers to keep the air-conditioning on, particularly during rainy days to avoid fogging of glass panels due to condensation to ensure driving safety;</p> <p>(e) Enforcement problems would arise in the absence of guidelines to determine when a vehicle was left idling, leading to disputes between law enforcement officers and drivers; and</p> <p>(f) Consideration should be given to extending the consultation period to September 2008 so that LegCo Members and the Administration could be invited to the taxi/PLB stands to experience the actual operation under hot weather; and</p> <p>(g) The proposed exemption for the first two PLBs at PLB stands could only be applicable to green minibuses and not red minibuses. This was because red minibuses did not have their own designated stands and there might be several red minibuses of different routes waiting at the same stand at the same time. It would be difficult to tell which would be the first two minibuses where the exemption applied. Therefore, consideration should be given to exempting red minibuses from the ban.</p>	<p>(d) and (g) The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected when finalising the proposal.</p>

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<p><u>Trucks and buses associations and workers' unions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hong Kong Association of Aircargo Truckers Ltd ● Hong Kong Container Tractor Owner Association ● 汽車交通運輸業總工會公共小巴分會 ● Kowloon Truck Merchants Association Ltd ● Tsuen Wan District Tourists and Passengers Omnibus Operators Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(04)) ● China Hongkong and Macau Boundary Crossing Bus Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(06)) ● Public Omnibus Operators Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(07)) ● Transport & Logistics Workers Union (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(08)) ● The Hong Kong Union of Light Van Employees (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(28)) ● 屯門及元朗區旅運巴士同業聯會 (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(16) and 554/07-08(02)) ● Hong Kong District Tourists and Passengers Omnibus Operators Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(25)) ● 九龍區旅運巴士同業聯會 (LC Paper Nos. CB(1) 519/07-08(26) and CB(1) 535/07-08(02)) ● Hong Kong Kowloon & N.T. Grab. Mounted Lorries Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(03)) ● Red Star Logistics Co Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(04)) 	<p>(a) Vehicles with turbo engines should be exempted as there was a genuine need for their engines to be left idling for a while before switching off and restarting;</p> <p>(b) The ban 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;</p> <p>(c) Bus drivers would have difficulties in complying with the ban, particularly if their buses were installed with sealed 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. Consideration should be given to exempting buses with sealed windows from the ban if there were passengers on board; and</p> <p>(d) 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. To maintain an optimum temperature, there was a need to turn on the air-conditioning for 15 minutes before boarding of passengers. Exemptions should be granted to tourist buses and omnibuses with passengers on board;</p> <p>(e) It was not fair to light van drivers if similar exemptions for taxis and PLBs operators were</p>	<p>(a) The Administration is seeking more detailed information from vehicle manufacturers.</p> <p>(b) to (f) In the consultation paper, extensive exemptions have been proposed to cater for the operational requirement of commercial vehicles. The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected when finalising the proposal.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ming Kee Container Transp. Co (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(05)) ● Sambo Transportation Co Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(06)) ● Jointyan Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(07)) ● Blooming Progress Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(08)) ● Hongkong International Terminals Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 594/07-08(04)) ● Non-franchised Public Buses Workers Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(05)) ● New Lantau Bus Co. (1973) Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 594/07-08(06)) 	<p>not granted to them; and</p> <p>(f) Bus associations and omnibus operators were concerned about claims from passengers who suffered from sickness or even death due to exposure to high temperatures in bus cabins associated with the need to comply with the ban</p>	
<p><u>Driving instructors associations and automobile associations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Right Hand Drive Motors Association Ltd ● Organization of Hong Kong Drivers ● Quality Driver Training Centre Ltd ● Hong Kong Society of Articulated Vehicle Driving Instructors Ltd ● Tai Wo Motors Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(03)) ● Kowloon Motor Driving Instructors' Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(19)) ● Hong Kong Automobile Association ● H.K. Vehicle Transportation Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(29)) 	<p>(a) A study on the impact of frequent switching off and restarting of engines on the performance of vehicles should be conducted;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(c) The proposed ban should be lifted during the hot summer months or when the ambient temperature reached a specified level;</p> <p>(d) Exemptions should be granted to certain types of vehicles with a genuine need to keep engines idling for operational reasons;</p>	<p>(a) In the consultation paper, extensive exemptions have already been proposed to obviate the need for frequent restarting.</p> <p>(b)-(f) In the consultation paper, extensive exemptions have been proposed to cater for the operational requirement of commercial vehicles. The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected when finalising the proposal.</p> <p>(g) The Administration will prepare clear</p>

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	<p>(e) Exemptions should be granted to learners under training lest the need to switch off and restart the engines would affect their driving lessons;</p> <p>(f) Exemptions should be granted to taxis, PLBs, public buses, tourist buses etc taking into account their operational needs; and</p> <p>(g) There should be clear guidelines on the types of vehicles to be exempted</p>	<p>enforcement guidelines for officers when enforcing the legislation.</p>
<p><u>Green groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Conservancy Association (CA) (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(13)) 	<p>CA supported the ban which should be applied throughout the territory at all times, including the summer. This was because emissions from idling vehicles would aggravate roadside pollution and affect the health of people, particularly those who had to work long periods by the roadside. There was a need to introduce legislation to prevent drivers from leaving air-conditioning on just for their own comfort while vehicles were idling. The Government should consider providing more shaded parking spaces and planting more trees at taxi and PLB stands. While exemptions should be granted to vehicles with operating need to keep their engines running while idling, no exemptions should be granted to other vehicles. It was worth noting that the technology to keep air-conditioning running while the engine was switched off was already commercially available and applied in hybrid models.</p>	<p>The support and views from green groups are noted. The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected, including those from the green groups, when finalising the proposal.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Green Sense (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(32))	<p>Green Sense supported the proposed ban in principle to improve roadside air quality. Apart from the ban, other transport measures, such as strengthening rail transport, should also be implemented. Drivers should not be allowed to keep air-conditioning on for their own comfort when vehicles were idling, as vehicles should not be used for air-conditioning purpose. If taxis and PLBs were expected to wait at their designated stands for a considerable length of time, they should be required to switch off their engines. In the long run, the bus companies should be requested to procure buses with windows that could be opened, so that passengers could enjoy fresh air without the need to rely on air-conditioning all the time. Bus drivers could then choose to turn off air-conditioning if the weather allowed which could help achieve savings in vehicle fuels. Consideration should also be given to improving the interior design and materials of buses to help cool the temperature of bus compartments.</p>	Ditto
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Green Council (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(33))	<p>Green Council supported the proposed ban in principle to reduce roadside air pollution. There was a need to provide clear guidelines on the implementation of the ban and the types of vehicles to be exempted. Apart from Traffic Wardens and Environment Protection Inspectors, the Police should also be empowered to enforce the ban. There should be clear definitions on "active boarding or alighting" and "moving queue". Exemptions should be given to vehicles with sealed windows, such as tourist coaches, boarded by</p>	Ditto

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	<p>passengers in hot weather. During the transitional period, verbal warnings should be given to inappropriately idling drivers to remind them of the effective date of the relevant legislation.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="159 419 844 496">● Greeners Action (LC Paper No. CB(1) 594/07-08(03)) <li data-bbox="159 935 844 1011">● Clear The Air (LC Paper No. CB(1)604/07-08(02)) <li data-bbox="159 1270 844 1347">● Clean Air Action Group (LC Paper No. CB(1) 594/07-08(02)) 	<p>Greeners Action was supportive of the proposed ban which was an important step to tackle the air pollution problem. Apart from implementing the ban territory-wide, the Administration should take further steps to improve the situation, including the implementation of electronic road pricing system which would effectively reduce traffic congestion. Bus companies should consider procuring buses with windows which could be opened to allow for fresh air, thereby reducing the reliance on air-conditioning and energy consumption. Efforts should also be made to promote the use of bicycles as a means of transport.</p> <p>Clear The Air fully supported the territory-wide implementation of the proposed ban given the impact of poor roadside air quality on those who were exposed to roadside pollution. The poor air quality would have significant impact on public health which would in turn increase health cost, reduce production and affect the economy of Hong Kong.</p> <p>Clean Air Action Group supported the need for legislation to ban idling vehicles with running engines. However, exemptions should be provided for certain types of vehicles with operating needs, such as emergency vehicles and vehicles with on</p>	<p>Ditto</p> <p>Ditto</p> <p>Ditto</p>

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	<p>board auxiliary engines etc. Vehicles in moving queues as well as the first two taxis and PLBs at their designated stands should likewise be exempted. Consideration should also be given to providing exemptions for vehicles used for carrying elderlies and the handicapped. More efforts should be made to provide for cleaner and more efficient transport, such as installation of emission reduction devices for vehicles and the use of more environment friendly vehicles.</p>	
<p><u>Professional institutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Association of Engineering Professionals in Society Ltd (AES) (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(12)) ● The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(14)) 	<p>AES supported the need to impose a ban on idling vehicles with running engines since there were many drivers who tended 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. There was however a need for exemptions for certain types of vehicles with operational needs.</p> <p>While welcoming measures to improve air quality, HKIE did not support the proposed ban for the following reasons -</p> <p>(a) There was no evidence to suggest that emissions from idling vehicles with running engines had</p>	<p>The support and views from AES are noted. The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected, including those from AES, when finalising the proposal.</p> <p>Although idling vehicles do not contribute significantly to the territory-wide emissions, they still generate pollutants and greenhouse gases and cause heat and noise nuisance to the pedestrians and shops nearby.</p>

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	<p>posed a serious problem which justified the need for the ban;</p> <p>(b) There were practical difficulties in implementing the ban since there was genuine need for certain types of engines to keep idling during starting and switching off;</p> <p>(c) If an offender was allowed 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</p> <p>(d) Vehicular emissions could more effectively be reduced with the use of more environment-friendly fuels and reduced reliance on air-conditioning</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The number of complaints against idling vehicles has kept rising in the past few years, indicating that the community has become growingly intolerant of idling vehicles and demands a more proactive approach to address the problem.</p> <p>Legislating against idling vehicles can reduce the pollutants and greenhouse gas generated and can reduce the associated nuisance problem. It also underlines the community's resolve to tackle air pollution.</p> <p>The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected, including those from HKIE, when finalising the proposal.</p>
<p><u>Political parties</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(20)) 	<p>DAB would support the proposed ban. However, the ban should be implemented flexibly to take into account operational needs of the transport trades. Exemptions should be granted to emergency vehicles and vehicles which were required to keep their engines running for some ancillary purposes. There were difficulties in enforcing the ban at taxi and PLB stands because the frequent switching off</p>	<p>The support and views from political parties are noted. The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected, including those from the political parties, when finalising the proposal.</p>

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	<p>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-compliance. 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 law enforcement officers and drivers.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Democratic Party (DP) (LC Paper No. CB(1) 519/07-08(21)) 	<p>DP supported the early implementation of the ban to help reduce roadside pollution for the benefit of public health. Apart from vehicles which were required to switch on their engines while idling for operational needs, there should not be too many exemptions lest the ban could not be effectively enforced. DP would request that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The ban should apply to vehicles of all fuel types i.e. diesel, petrol and LPG vehicles alike; (b) The ban should be implemented territory-wide and throughout the year; (c) There should not be any grace period for the ban as this might lead to implementation difficulties; (d) District Councils should be consulted if exemptions were to be granted in relevant 	<p>Ditto</p>

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	<p>districts; and</p> <p>(e) Other than the exemptions set out in the consultation document, no further exemptions should be granted to PLBs, non-franchised buses and school buses. However, taking into account the operating conditions of different taxi stands, some degrees of flexibility could be considered if a practicable solution could be worked out by the taxi trades</p>	
<p><u>Others</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mini Spotters (LC Paper No. CB(1) 535/07-08(01)) ● Hong Kong Waste Disposal Industry Association (HKWDIA) (LC Paper No. CB(1) 319/07-08(02)) ● Coalition of Hong Kong Newspaper and Magazine Merchants 	<p>Mini Spotters supported the application of the ban to all vehicles because the Police could not be able to enforce the law unless the law was amended to the effect that any idling could not be tolerated.</p> <p>HKWDIA had reservations on the proposed ban because there were certain types of vehicles which were required to keep their engines running for ancillary purposes. Besides, the transport trades would not keep their engines running while vehicles were idling because this would use more fuels and hence higher operating cost. To prevent intractable enforcement problems, there should be clear guidelines on how the ban and exemptions should be implemented.</p> <p>The Coalition supported the proposed ban as newspaper vendors were exposed to roadside pollution from idling vehicles with running engines. However, it would accept the need for exemptions for certain types of vehicles.</p>	<p><u>Mini Spotters, Coalition of Hong Kong Newspaper and Magazine Merchants, Ir Iain Seymour HART and HKEIA</u> Their support and views are noted. The Administration will carefully consider all the views collected when finalising the proposal.</p> <p><u>HKWDIA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Consultation Document has proposed to exempt vehicles which are required to run their engines (including on-board auxiliary engines) for some ancillary purpose other than providing air-conditioning for comfort of drivers or passengers. ● The Administration will prepare clear enforcement guidelines for officers to enforce the new legislation.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ir Iain Seymour HART (LC Paper No. CB(1) 594/07-08(05))● Hong Kong Environmental Industry Association (HKEIA) (LC Paper No. CB(1) 594/07-08(07))	<p>Mr HART Fully supported a ban on idling engines as one of the means to reduce the serious negative effects arising from the use of vehicles</p> <p>HKEIA supported the ban as a temporary measure to tackle roadside pollution and to protect the environment for the benefit of public health. It also supported that the Government should provide funding on the research on automotive technologies and encourage use of hybrid vehicles</p>	