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Panel on Environmental Affairs

Meeting on 28 January 2008

Background brief on building energy efficiency

Introduction

A major factor in ensuring the quality of life in Hong Kong is the need to conserve and sustain a green environment. The efficient use of energy makes a significant contribution in this direction, ensuring both the wiser use of the world's resources as well as generating less pollution in the production of energy. In this connection, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) set up an Energy Efficiency Office (EEO) in 1994 to provide the technical expertise and the drive for energy efficiency and conservation programmes. The Office works to issue codes of practice, including the Building Energy Codes (BEC) and establish guidelines etc related to the efficient use and conservation of electricity.

Hong Kong Energy Efficiency Registration Scheme for Buildings

2. In October 1998, EMSD launched the Hong Kong Energy Efficiency Registration Scheme for Buildings (the Scheme) with the aim to promote the application of BEC. The set of five Codes cover lighting, air conditioning, electrical as well as lift and escalator installations which stipulate the minimum energy performance standards of these installations. Adoption of BEC is at the discretion of the designer. Designers, architects, building developers, property management agencies etc can submit relevant details of their building for assessment of compliance with BEC. The Scheme requires the certification of such information by a Registered Professional Engineer of discipline under the Engineers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 409). A registration certificate will be issued to a building that successfully meets the individual BEC standards. In addition, a registered building can also use the Scheme's "Energy Efficient Building Logo" on related documents to publicize the achievement on energy efficiency. Up to October 2007, 1 994 registration certificates have been issued to 774 building venues involving 2 162 installations.

Discussion on building energy efficiency

3. In the course of scrutiny of the Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) Bill, which requires the provision by suppliers of specified information in respect of and the display of energy labels on specified energy-using products, including household and office appliances, members of the relevant Bills Committee note that the commercial sector has a much higher energy consumption level (61%) than the residential sector (25%). They therefore consider that apart from the residential sector, efforts should also be made to promote energy savings in the commercial sector. While acknowledging that the Administration has launched the Scheme to provide recognition for the compliance with BECs in commercial and office buildings, they are disappointed at the low overall participation rate. In this connection, they urge the Administration to consider turning the voluntary Scheme into a mandatory one.

4. In light of the Bill Committee's concern, the Administration undertakes to consult the relevant stakeholders on the proposal. Meanwhile, it will continue to strengthen the promotion of voluntary compliance with BECs through organizing promotional activities and seminars.

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