

1 December 2008

Hon. Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Chairman of the Bills Committee on
Public Health and Municipal Services
Legislative Council

Dear Chairman,

Thank you for asking me to give my view on this Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2008.

The opening up of the mainland's economy since 1978 has led to the recent rapid economic growth and a corresponding demand for dietary protein by the general population. However the biosecurity and regulatory measures from the farm-to-table have not kept up with the growth in number of food animals and products which were associated with the unprecedented epidemics of zoonotic infectious diseases and now melamine-associated renal disease.

HKSAR must now be fully prepared for this risk. The ability to trace, recall and ban potentially hazardous food item is indispensable for the proper functioning of the Centre for Food Safety. In addition, the Centre needs to act in a more proactive manner in monitoring new or emerging food contaminants and pathogens through better collection of intelligence from various sources.

I therefore fully support this bill.

Yours faithfully,

Professor KY Yuen
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Department of Microbiology
The University of Hong Kong
and
Chairman, Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene
Food and Health Bureau