

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Alleviating the burden of travelling expenses”
moved by Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 17 December 2008**

**Motion as amended by Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon Andrew CHENG
Kar-foo and Hon WONG Sing-chi**

That the fares of local public transport are escalating, and local franchise bus companies have recently announced the cancellation of fare concessions for the elderly on holidays and same day return fare concessions which were provided in the past three years, causing the travelling expenses of the elderly and grassroots to increase, this Council expresses condemnation in this regard; since public transport operators have continued to increase their fares, causing the public to bear a heavy burden of travelling expenses for a long time, coupled with the fact that a large number of middle-class and grassroots face further difficulties in life amid continuous layoffs and pay cuts by enterprises under the impact of the financial tsunami, this Council urges the Government to adopt further effective measures to alleviate the burden of travelling expenses on the public, including:

- (a) providing subsidies to the MTR Corporation, bus companies, green minibus and ferry operators so that they will offer half-fare concessions to passengers on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, thereby enabling the public to have more opportunities to get together with their families and friends on those days;
- (b) further relaxing the eligibility criteria and subsidy period under the Transport Support Scheme, and expanding the Scheme to cover all districts in the territory;
- (c) discussing with various public transport operators to offer the Free-ride Day for the elderly on Sundays and public holidays on a permanent basis, formulate an implementation timetable for the provision of half-fare concessions to people with disabilities, and study the feasibility of introducing daily, weekly and monthly travel passes that are valid among various public transport operators;
- (d) focusing on the problem of high fares of outlying island ferry services, actively studying various suitable options, including substantially increasing the non-fare box revenue of ferry operators or the Government directly operating the services, etc; and allocating resources to alleviate

the burden of ferry service expenses on outlying island residents, and offering half-fare concessions on ferry services to students of outlying islands;

- (e) discussing with the MTR Corporation to extend its two-year fare-freeze period, re-launch the 'Ride 10 Get One Free' Promotion and, according to the request of the residents and using more consistent standards, set up more MTR Fare Savers as well as explore further extension of the existing monthly ticket schemes;
- (f) discussing with the franchised bus companies ways to improve their existing fare structures, expeditiously revise the scale of fares under the Public Bus Services Ordinance as well as the route groupings under the scale, reformulate the existing guidelines on the setting of fares to provide comprehensive sectional fares and bus-bus interchange concessions, including discounts for interchange among buses of different companies, provide half-fare concessions to all full-time students, as well as introduce daily and monthly ticket schemes for buses; and
- (g) on the basis of the above measures, further utilizing Octopus card which is widely used by the public to provide all people in the territory with concessions on monthly tickets that are valid for use on all types of public transport, and continuing to provide the current fare concessions for the elderly on holidays and same day return fare concessions provided by local franchise bus companies, hence will provide convenience to the public and not lead to excessively high administrative and operating costs to the various public transport operators, thereby alleviating the burden of travelling expenses on the general public, particularly the elderly and the working class; and
- (h) discussing with the MTR Corporation to establish a fare stabilization fund to be underpinned by the proceeds from properties and make monthly ticket schemes a permanent arrangement.