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7 January 2009

Ms Miranda Hon
Clerk to Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Fax: 2537 1204)

Dear Ms Hon,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
results of value for money audits ("Report No. 51")**

Reduction and recovery of municipal solid waste (Chapter 11)

Thank you for your letter of 22 December 2008.

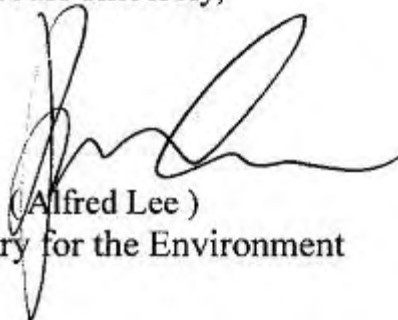
Part II of the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354) provides for the preparation of waste disposal plans to set out the arrangements for the collection and disposal of all solid and semi-solid wastes and all existing and proposed waste disposal sites. The Waste Disposal Plan (WDP), which was published by the Government in December 1989, dealt with the collection and disposal aspects of waste management. It also set out a tentative programme for the development of new facilities, namely the three strategic landfills and the transfer station network; and the closure of old incinerators and small landfills. Given its focus on waste disposal and treatment, the WDP is not the most suitable vehicle to address the other aspects of waste management strategies, namely waste avoidance, reuse, recovery and recycling.

A Waste Reduction Study was commissioned by the Environmental Protection Department in 1994 to identify ways to encourage waste avoidance, minimisation, recovery and recycling. The findings were presented to the LegCo Environmental Affairs Panel, which requested the Administration to provide a total picture of its waste reduction targets and implementation timetable. The Government subsequently consulted the public on the draft Waste Reduction Plan in May 1997, and published the Waste Reduction Framework Plan in November 1998 to set out the waste reduction strategy and targets.

Since then, there has been a continuing and rising public aspiration for a sustainable waste management strategy which places primary emphasis on waste reduction, reuse and recovery. In response to this public aspiration, in particular the Report on the Engagement Process for a First Sustainable Development Strategy published by the Council for Sustainable Development (SDC) in May 2005, the Government published "A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)" (Policy Framework) in December 2005, setting out a comprehensive waste management strategy for the next ten years. Enshrining the polluter-pays principle, the Policy Framework proposes policy tools to encourage the public to recycle more and discard less. It also covers the adoption of latest technologies for waste management facilities. The Policy Framework has adopted the waste management targets laid down in the SDC Report.

The waste management targets set out in the Policy Framework are the results of the SDC's extensive public engagement process. The Administration remains committed to achieving these targets as set out in the Policy Framework as soon as practicable and will continue to report to the Legislative Council on the progress made.

Yours sincerely,



(Alfred Lee)

for Secretary for the Environment

c.c. Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (fax: 2147 5239)
Director of Audit (fax: 2583 9063)