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**Submission to Legco
Panel on Environmental Affairs**

06th Oct. 09

Subject: Clear The Air views on the revision of the Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) to better protect Public Health and offer a more sustainable quality of life in the SAR.

Summary:

The Hong Kong AQO's last revised in 1987 have long been in need of reflecting the recent economic and social evolution of the territory. The drivers of economic growth have evolved and with it the social conscience of the public which now claims a say in the way the environment is managed.

It is now time the outcomes of this specific debate drive policy change to fight air pollution in a decisive way and in the shortest possible period.

In this regard Clear The Air supported by all its members are asking the Government to adopt the **highest AQO standards and not interim targets** in order to fix a clear benchmark on which to align specific air pollution reduction targets, we believe, are necessary to clean up the air on the roadside and territory wide to restore Hong Kong's quality of life and international image.

Such AQO should then drive the following concrete air pollution reduction measures through for instance :

- mandatory retirement of old polluting diesel vehicles (over 70,000 of them)
- the mandatory installation of fine particulates agglomerators on our local coal power plants to cut the emissions of asthma causing RSP
- for the marine air pollution : the adoption of Emission Control Areas for international shipping encompassing the whole PRD
- and the control and reduction of road traffic in the city centres as highlighted in recent European studies showing that **only traffic reduction through ERP** can improve air quality on the roadside, as proven now in the UK, Sweden, Germany, Italy, and in Asia : Singapore, Japan, and very soon Indonesia.

We believe the adoption of the full AQO standards, not the interim targets, will cause these above mentioned necessary changes in the shortest time to improve our air, and cut down on the present HKD 2bln in health care. Let's not forget that the present air pollution is most detrimental to the elderly and the very young population, both submitted in critical areas to breathing difficulties and cardiovascular diseases also linked to brain malfunction by black carbon emitted from diesel fumes.

The full AQO standards are the only way to limit in the shortest time possible the emissions of these dangerous pollutants harming first, the most vulnerable members of our community, and more generally the sustainability and attractiveness of Hong Kong as a place to work and live.