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Panel on Environmental Affairs

Setting up of the Subcommittee on Improving Air Quality

Purpose

This paper seeks the views of the Panel on Environmental Affairs (the Panel) on the setting up of the Subcommittee on Improving Air Quality (the Subcommittee) as suggested by members at the Panel meeting on 27 October 2008.

Background

2. The ambient air pollution problem has all along been a public concern. It not only has a significant bearing on public health and the quality of life, but also on the long-term development of Hong Kong. Multinational enterprises are reluctant to set up their regional headquarters in Hong Kong due to the deteriorating air quality. To reduce air pollution, the Administration has formulated the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Regional Air Quality Management Plan with the Guangdong Provincial Government, which aims at achieving specific emission reduction targets by 2010. On the local front, the Administration is now reviewing the air quality objectives taking into account the World Health Organization's guidelines. Other measures, including imposing emission caps on power plants, providing financial incentives to encourage early replacement of pre-Euro and Euro I commercial diesel vehicles, banning idling vehicles with running engines, promoting energy conservation and saving, are being contemplated.

3. To enable more focused discussion on Government's efforts in addressing air pollution, the Panel passed the following motion moved by Mr Andrew CHENG and seconded by Professor Patrick LAU at its meeting on 27 October 2008 -

"That the Panel on Environmental Affairs resolves to set up under its purview a Subcommittee on Improving Air Quality."

Proposed Terms of Reference of the Subcommittee

4. "To monitor and study policies as well as public concerns on improving air quality."

Proposed work plan

5. In the current legislative session, the Subcommittee will focus its work on the following major areas -

- (a) Government efforts in addressing climate change;
- (b) Progress of measures to achieve the emission reduction targets under the PRD Regional Air Quality Management Plan beyond 2010; and
- (c) Progress of review of Hong Kong's Air Quality Objectives.

Proposed time frame for completion of work

6. Given that improving air quality is a long-term commitment, it is not envisaged that the Subcommittee can complete its work within a short period. The Panel will have to consider the need for continuation of the Subcommittee's work at the end of this legislative session. The Subcommittee will submit a progress report on its work to the Panel at the end of the legislative session.

Advice sought

7. Members are invited to decide on the setting up the Subcommittee and if so, the proposed Terms of Reference and work plan of the Subcommittee as set out above.

8. Subject to members' endorsement, the Secretariat will make arrangements for the first meeting and invite Panel members to signify membership for the Subcommittee.