
立法會秘書處

Legislative Council Secretariat

新聞稿 Press Release

LegCo to debate alleviating the burden of travelling expenses

The Legislative Council will hold a meeting this Wednesday (December 17) at 11 am in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building. During the meeting, Members will debate a motion on alleviating the burden of travelling expenses.

The motion, to be moved by Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, states: " That, as the people of Hong Kong has long been bearing a heavy burden of travelling expenses and 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 effective measures to alleviate the burden of travelling expenses on the public, including:

(a) providing subsidies to the MTR Corporation, bus companies 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, studying suitable options 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, set up more MTR Fare Savers and explore further extension of the existing monthly ticket schemes; and

(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."

Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon Andrew CHENG will move separate amendments to Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming's motion.

Members will also debate a motion on buying back the shares of The Link. The motion, to be moved by Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau, states: "That, The Link Real Estate Investment Trust ("The Link"), being the largest landlord of retail shops in Hong Kong, has a total of 11 000 tenants providing services of daily necessities to three million residents in public housing estates, yet since its listing, The Link has deviated from its original principle and philosophy and increased rents every year, causing great burden to the lower class and small shop tenants, and despite the increase in shop rentals by almost 30% in 2007 and the recent economic downturn in Hong

Kong, The Link still increases rents against the market trend, thereby reducing room for survival of the grassroots and causing social discontent; hence this Council urges the Government to balance the community interests at large in handling the issue of rental of public housing shopping arcades, and consider various possible means to buy back sufficient shares of The Link to become the major shareholder, so as to influence the management of The Link Management Limited to take into consideration its corporate social responsibility."

Hon CHAN Kam-lam, Hon Alan LEONG, Hon Vincent FANG and Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung will move separate amendments to Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau's motion.

Meanwhile, the Secretary for Food and Health will move a resolution under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance to seek the Council's approval to the Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulation 2008 and the Poisons List (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulation 2008, made by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board on 25 November 2008.

During the meeting, Members will ask the Government 20 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies. The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the Legislative Council InfoFax Service (Tel: 2869 9568) or the Legislative Council web site (<http://www.legco.gov.hk>).

Members of the public are welcome to observe the proceedings of the meeting from the public galleries of the Legislative Council Chamber. They may reserve seats by calling 2869 9399 during office hours. Seats will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Members of the public can also listen to the meeting via the audio webcast system on the Legislative Council homepage.

Ends/Monday, December 15, 2008

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