

Views On Buildings Energy Efficiency Bill

Climate change due to excessive carbon emission has drawn much attention worldwide. In order to help save the changes, fundamental actions are basically focused on developing renewable energy resources and improving energy efficiency on energy generation, distribution and utilization. On renewable energy developments, advancements have been made in areas of photovoltaic technologies, wind generation technologies, fuel cells, etc. However, the investment on energy efficiency and saving measures in existing installations are expected to produce the fastest return. In Hong Kong electricity generation accounts for 60% of energy consumption locally, and buildings take up 89% of total electricity consumed. Energy efficiency and saving measures are inevitably to be focused on electricity generation, distribution, utilization and recovery. Recently, there are many carbon emission reduction initiatives promoted by the HKSAR government, including: (1) identification of building integrated PV and small wind generations as potential renewable energy applications in Hong Kong; (2) the introduction of mandatory building energy codes, and (3) the promotion of hybrid fuel vehicles and electric vehicles. Both (1) and (3) would require a long-term investment and intensive field application study before a commercially viable solution can be achievable. While we believe that the introduction of mandatory building energy codes would be able to see immediate effects on energy saving and environmental protection.

In fact similar Buildings Energy Efficiency Bill had been launched in UK and other countries for a few years and The IET was also one of the consultation parties in UK. The IET Hong Kong fully supports this Buildings Energy Efficiency Bill as it has been consulted and discussed among various parties and organizations. The draft at hand now has taken care of concerns of various stakeholders. In fact the Energy Efficiency Code has been in place for over 10 years for voluntary implementation. We believe that this Buildings Energy Efficiency Bill will not only promote the usage of electricity smartly and wisely, it also helps to reduce the emission of greenhouse gas from electricity generation. Consequently, the air quality will be improved. Time is not at our side. Hong Kong SAR Government must take action in improving the energy usage and not to be lagging behind other cities and regions on this significant issue. Legislating the requirements on building energy consumptions seems to be the most effective way to reinforce such a development. This would also help to send a clear message to the public that HKSAR Government is serious on energy saving and climate change is a reality nowadays.

On the detailed technical requirements, the present draft Code can be regarded as a starting point, which should be welcomed by all parties concerned. Through the implementation of this Energy Bill in the years to come, when more or more data can be collected and analyzed by relevant government department, it is expected that further update of the Code to cope with worldwide developments would be seen.