

HONG KONG
RETAIL MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION

香港零售管理協會

18 March 2010

The Hon Edward Yau Tang-wah, JP
Secretary for the Environment
Environment Bureau
46/F, Revenue Tower
5 Gloucester Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear the Hon Mr Yau

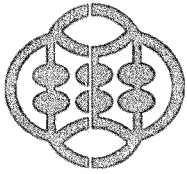
Re: Plastic Shopping Bag Levy

We write to seek clarification on Tuesday's Ming Pao report on Plastic Shopping Bag Levy.

The report in question quoted an anonymous government source as saying that **the Government has currently no plan to extend the levy to retailers beyond the existing prescribed retail outlets.** While we appreciate that you might find it inappropriate to comment on what might be regarded as a speculative press report, the reality is that such kind of reports has shaken our confidence in the Government's commitment to review the levy scheme in coming July.

In this regard, we would like to seek clarification and assurance from you that the Government remains committed to a reduction in the indiscriminate use of plastic bags, which necessitates action being extended to all retail outlets in Hong Kong.

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Separately, we note in the minutes of the ACE Waste Management Subcommittee meeting held on 27 November 2009 that the Subcommittee had discussed the way forward for the Plastic Shopping Bag Levy scheme. **We are very surprised that the Subcommittee did not consider the scheme should be extended to all retailers and suggested the Government to consider a selective approach.** We strongly believe that extending the scheme to all outlets is the only way to reduce indiscriminate use of plastic bags in a fair and effective manner. Applying the levy to only 4% of all retail outlets cannot be justified as an effective means to achieve the policy objective of reducing indiscriminate use of plastic bags.

The Government has been promoting the success of the levy scheme since its implementation but the reality is that the current scheme has not been, and never will be, successful if it only applies to 4% of retail outlets. The overall plastic bag reduction in the whole of Hong Kong has been, and continues to be, very limited. We do not understand why the "best practice" cannot be extended to outlets beyond the existing 4% of retail outlets. Prescribed retailers are left feeling betrayed as many of them were supporters of the Government's voluntary reduction programmes that were proven to be so effective.

We would like to seek assurance from you that **the Government will provide a roadmap for next phase** of the levy scheme in the very near future.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Mak
Chairman

* cc LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs
ACE Waste Management Subcommittee