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23 February 2012

Clerk to Panel on Development
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms. Connie SZETO)

By Fax (2840 0797) and By Mail

Dear Ms. SZETO,

**Legislative Council - Panel on Development
Issues relating to water supply systems in new buildings arising from
the recent detection of Legionella bacteria in the Central Government
Offices and the Legislative Council Complex**

At the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Development held on 16 January 2012, Members requested the Administration to reflect Members' views and concerns to the Prevention of Legionnaires' Disease Committee ("Committee"), and to report back to the Panel outcome of the Committee meeting of 8 February 2012.

At the Committee meeting held on 8 February 2012, Professor Yuen Kwok Yung of the Department of Microbiology of the University of Hong Kong was invited to share his findings. Panel Members' views and concerns have been reflected to the Committee. The outcome of the Committee meeting of 8 February 2012 is summarized as follows.

The Tamar Case

The Committee noted the investigation findings and follow-up actions taken by the various government departments at Tamar, informed by discussion with Professor Yuen Kwok-yung. The Committee noted that the presence of Legionella bacteria in cold/hot water systems was inevitable due to the ubiquitous nature of the organism in aqueous environments. It endorsed the

view that stagnation of water in warm temperature at affected sites in Tamar might have led to the proliferation of Legionella bacteria, and noted that such proliferation had been effectively reduced to acceptable levels after thorough disinfection, and noted that remedial actions had been taken.

Recommendation in Regard to the Testing for Legionella Bacteria

After reviewing international guidelines, including the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Kingdom's Health and Safety Executive, and considering experts' opinions and advice, the Committee was of the view that regular testing for Legionella bacteria in cold/hot water systems in buildings in the community was generally not required. The WHO holds the view that the most important factors concerning control of Legionella proliferation are appropriate design, control of risk factors and maintenance of individual systems. Testing for Legionella should be conducted for investigation upon notification of a human case of Legionnaires' disease in the buildings concerned.

The Committee confirmed that testing of Legionella bacteria in cold/hot water systems of newly completed buildings was not necessary. The Committee recommended that new cold/hot water systems including water tank and distribution pipes should continue to follow the Water Supplies Department (WSD)'s guidelines on cleansing and disinfection upon completion, which is in line with the WHO's recommendations. Details of WSD's guidelines are available at the following links: www.wsd.gov.hk/filemanager/article/en/upload/128/cir0602.pdf and www.wsd.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/pdf/ww0497.pdf.

Follow up Action to be Taken by the Committee - Review of Code of Practice for Prevention of Legionnaires' Disease

The Committee also discussed the need to review the existing Code of Practice (CoP) for Prevention of Legionnaires' Disease issued to promote public awareness of the disease and provide technical guidelines on prevention measures. In light of the findings of the Tamar case, the CoP would be reviewed regarding the design, operation and maintenance precautions of cold/hot water systems as appropriate, particularly in respect of the flushing of infrequently used water pipes/outlets and localized water heaters with reference to international guidelines. The CoP is available at the following link: www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/e_download/pps/others/COP-PLD_E_Final_20071204.pdf.

The Committee also considered the need to enhance public education to increase public awareness on prevention of Legionnaires' disease, and new initiatives would be taken.

A press release was issued after the meeting of 8 February 2012 to publish the outcome of the meeting. The press release is available at the link: www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201202/08/P201202080457.htm.

Yours sincerely,



(K.K. LI)

for Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

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