



Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs  
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19 March 2012

**By e-mail & fax**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Panel on Environmental Affairs**  
**Proposed Exemption under the Genetically Modified Organisms**  
**(Control of Release) Ordinance (Cap. 607)**

Green Power would like to submit our views to the Panel on Environmental Affairs regarding the proposed exemption of genetically modified (GM) papayas under the captioned Ordinance. This letter serves to supersede our letter dated 7 March 2012 and to further elaborate our views on the proposed exemption of GM papayas.

We support the captioned Ordinance which is to give effect to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to control the release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into the environment and the import and export of GMOs among different countries.

According to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), the total number of papaya trees in the territory is estimated at 350,000, of which some 60% might be genetically modified. We also note that AFCD has conducted risk assessment on GM papaya and concluded that they were unlikely to pose adverse biosafety effect on the biological diversity of the local environment. Therefore, the Government has the intention to exempt GM papaya from the control under the captioned Ordinance. In this regard, we noticed that the Government has recently proposed to exempt all GM papaya from the application of section 5 of the Ordinance on local release while only two commercialized varieties of GM papaya would be exempted from the application of section 7 on the import for release under the Ordinance.

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Green Power does not object the Administration's proposed exemption of GM papaya from the control of the captioned Ordinance in order to implement the GMO subsidiary legislation as soon as possible. However, we recommend that the Government should continue to monitor the latest progress and development of GM papaya, and carry out a review of the exemption of GM papaya in at least three years time in light of the latest risk assessment information of GM technology and biosafety of GMOs. If the outcome of the future risk assessment advises that GM papaya may pose adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the local environment, the Genetically Modified Organisms (Control of Release) Expert Group should review the exemption of GM papayas. On the other hand, the Government should also strengthen the monitoring over the import and local planting of GMOs that would have adverse biosafety impacts in order to protect Hong Kong's biodiversity.

Meanwhile, we urge the Government to support the "papaya exchange programme" launched by the organic farmer groups and to step up the publicity on GMOs and biodiversity conservation.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Eric P. K. Tsang  
Chairman  
Green Power

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