

Panel on Transport

Meeting on 6 February 2012

Information note on the use of electric vehicles

The subject of "Use of Electric Vehicle on Expressways" has not been discussed by the Panel on Transport before. It is noted that the subject of "Promoting the Use of Electric Vehicles" was discussed by the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 22 June 2009. Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming also asked a Legislative Council (LegCo) question on the wider use of electric vehicles at the Council meeting on 1 December 2010. To facilitate members' discussion on the subject at the meeting on 6 February 2012, the relevant papers are attached for members' reference -

- (a) Administration's paper entitled "Promoting the Use of Electric Vehicles" [LC Paper No. CB(1)1945/08-09(04)];
and
- (b) Administration's reply to the LegCo question raised by Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming at the Council meeting on 1 December 2010 regarding the wider use of electric vehicles.

Legislative Council Secretariat
Council Business Division 1
31 January 2012

For discussion
on 22 June 2009

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Promoting the Use of Electric Vehicles

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the progress of Government's efforts in promoting the use of electric vehicles in Hong Kong.

MEASURES ANNOUNCED IN THE 2009-10 BUDGET

2. Promoting the use of electric vehicles will not only improve roadside air quality, but will also create business opportunities for industries in Hong Kong that are related to electric vehicles. In this year's Budget, the Government identified the promotion of electric vehicles as one of the key measures to promote green economy. Relevant measures include –

- (a) extending the waiver of First Registration Tax on electric vehicles for five years till March 2014;
- (b) promoting the setting up of vehicle battery charging facilities, which includes the examining of the feasibility of setting up battery charging facilities in Government and private multi-storey car parks;
- (c) exploring collaboration with electric vehicle manufacturers on the promotion and actively participating in the trials on electric vehicles in Hong Kong. The Government will also consider introducing electric vehicles into its fleet when the related technology has matured and the vehicles are available on the market; and

- (d) setting up a steering committee under the leadership of the Financial Secretary to make recommendations on strategy and specific measures to promote the use of electric vehicles.

WORK PLAN AND LATEST DEVELOPMENT

3. The Steering Committee on the Promotion of Electric Vehicles was set up in April this year. Its terms of reference and membership list are at the **Annex**. The Committee held its first meeting on 12 May this year, at which it examined the strategic work plan as well as work under planning in promoting the use of electric vehicles.

4. The Committee agreed that key efforts in promoting electric vehicles in the future should focus on –

- (a) actively participating in the trials on electric vehicles: the Government commenced in May this year the trial on the electric vehicle from Mitsubishi of Japan. We will also commence the trial on Shenzhen BYD's plug-in dual mode hybrid vehicles together with the Shenzhen Municipal Government in July. The Government will continue to explore with other vehicle manufacturers the possibility of conducting trials on electric vehicles of different brands and models (including commercial vehicles);
- (b) enhancing cooperation with vehicle manufacturers: the Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mitsubishi and Nissan Motor in February and April this year respectively to promote the use of electric vehicles. The Government recently secured Mitsubishi's agreement on the supply of a number of electric vehicles from its first batch of limited production in the near future. Also, the Secretary for the Environment visited Toyota Motor during his trip to Japan in April, and explored the opportunity in promoting the wider use of plug-in hybrid vehicles in Hong Kong. The Government will continue to explore collaboration opportunities with different electric vehicle manufacturers;

- (c) exploring business opportunities on electric vehicles: the Government established the Hong Kong Automotive Parts and Accessory Systems R&D Centre in April 2006 to facilitate the transfer of technology of R&D findings to related industries. Over the past three years, the R&D Centre embarked on eight projects in relation to hybrid or electric vehicles with funding of over \$20 million. A series of related projects is also under planning at the moment. One of the major areas the R&D Centre will focus on in the future is the technology of producing battery and other auto parts of electric vehicles. The Government will continue to provide support and assist the commercial and industrial sectors to explore business opportunities on electric vehicles;
- (d) setting up battery charging facilities for electric vehicles: we will actively explore how to encourage the business sector, including the property developers and private car park operators, etc., to provide charging facilities. Members of the Steering Committee on the Promotion of Electric Vehicles include representatives from the power companies, property developers and private car park operators. They will offer views to the Government in this regard. Recently, a power company signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a private car park operator and a property management company to develop charging facilities. The Government welcomes this development. We will also actively study the feasibility of providing charging facilities in Government multi-storey car parks; and
- (e) complementary legislative framework: in accordance with regulation 4 of Road Traffic (Expressway) Regulations (Chapter 374Q), no person shall drive or use on an expressway any vehicle unless it belongs to a designated type of vehicles of which the cylinder capacity of the engine is not less than 125 cubic centimetres. As electric vehicle does not have any cylinder, it is necessary to apply for special permit. The design of electric vehicles is at a developing stage, and we will

consider how our legislation could complement relevant development.

VIEWS SOUGHT

5. Members are invited to note and offer views on Government's efforts on this front.

Environment Bureau
June 2009

Steering Committee on the Promotion of Electric Vehicles

Terms of Reference

To recommend a strategy complementary with specific measures to promote the use of electric vehicles in Hong Kong, having regard to the resulting energy efficiency, environmental benefits and the creation of business opportunities.

Membership (from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2011)

Chairman

Financial Secretary

Members

Mr Charles Nicholas BROOKE

Ir Prof CHAN Ching-chuen

Mr Adrian CHENG Chi-kong

Prof Peter Ronald HILLS

Dr York LIAO

Mr TSO Kai-sum

Dr Patrick WANG Shui-chung

Mr Michael WONG Yick-kam

Mr Thomas Jefferson WU

Mr Trevor YANG

Mrs Betty YUEN SO Siu-mai

Secretary for the Environment*

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury*

Secretary for Transport and Housing*

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development*

Secretary for Development*

* or representative

Press Releases

LCQ 19: The wider use of electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Hok-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Edward Yau, at the Legislative Council meeting today (December 1):

Question:

The Chief Executive indicated in last year's Policy Address that the Environment Bureau (ENB) had been working with a number of electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers, and the Government expected a supply of around 200 EVs for the local market in this financial year. Yet, it has been reported recently that there would only be 20 EVs available for renting early next year. In addition, under the restrictions of the existing regulations, EV owners have to apply for special permits before they can drive EVs on an expressway. Regarding the ways for actually making Hong Kong the "second in Asia, after Japan, where EVs are most widely used" as stated in last year's Policy Address, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the actual number of EVs being supplied to Hong Kong at present; of the discrepancy between the actual supply and the Government's anticipated supply; of the reasons for such discrepancy;

(b) given that ENB indicated at the meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs held on June 22, 2009 that, since EVs did not have any cylinder, under the existing restrictions of the Road Traffic (Expressway) Regulations (Cap.374 sub.leg.Q), EV owners who wished to drive their EVs in Hong Kong would need to apply for special permits according to the Regulations, of the time required for the Government to vet and approve applications for such special permits; apart from applying for such permits, whether there are other restrictions in relation to owners' driving their EVs on roads; whether the Government will revise the relevant regulations gearing to the policy of extensively promoting the use of EVs; and

(c) whether the Government has carried out studies together with the Mainland on the support and integration (such as the technology for charging batteries) in relation to the use of EVs in both the Mainland and Hong Kong, so as to complement the long-term development of using EVs; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) To promote the wider use of EVs in Hong Kong, the Government has been discussing with and encouraging different EV manufacturers to introduce their EVs into Hong Kong. Earlier on, Mitsubishi's "i-MiEV", Tesla's "Roadster" and EuAuto's "MyCar" were launched in the local retail market. For Mitsubishi's "i-MiEV" and Tesla's "Roadster", Hong Kong is the first Asian city outside Japan where they have been launched in the retail market. Smith, a commercial EV manufacturer, also plans to launch their commercial EVs in Hong Kong by the end of this

year. Nissan has also decided to provide some units of "LEAF" out of its first batch of EV production for supply to corporate clients in Hong Kong. The first "Nissan LEAF" is expected to arrive in February 2011, subject to the placement of purchase orders. Hong Kong will be the first Asian market of this car outside Japan.

As at mid-November 2010, there were altogether 85 EVs for road use in Hong Kong. We believe that the figure will increase as more EVs, which are being developed and put to commercial production worldwide, enter the Hong Kong market.

(b) At present, if a certain EV model certified by the Transport Department (TD) after a vehicle type approval process is assessed to be suitable for use on an expressway, its registered owner may apply to TD for an expressway permit under the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations so that it can be used on an expressway. An EV owner may apply for vehicle first registration and an expressway permit at the same time. In general, the permit, together with the vehicle registration document and the vehicle licence, can be issued to the applicant on the second working day after the application. As for road use, like users of other vehicles, EV users must abide by road traffic regulations and codes. TD will formulate measures to facilitate the introduction of EVs into Hong Kong with reference to international practices as well as the performance and use of EVs.

(c) Most EVs currently available for sale in Hong Kong can be charged with the common domestic 3-rectangular-pin socket outlet. To support car park operators, property management companies and property developers in the provision of suitable EV charging facilities, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has prepared the "Technical Guidelines on Charging Facilities for Electric Vehicles" (Technical Guidelines) and is actively liaising with the trade to provide technical information. EMSD will continue to keep in view the development in the standards of charging facilities around the world (including the Mainland) to update the Technical Guidelines in a timely manner. It will also ensure that the local EV charging facilities can both meet the practical needs in Hong Kong and keep in line with the international standards.

Ends/Wednesday, December 1, 2010
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