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Panel on Transport  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn: Ms Sophie LAU)

23 May 2014

(Fax No. 2978 7569)

Dear Ms LAU,

**Panel on Transport**  
**Motion passed at the meeting on 25 March 2014**

At the meeting on 25 March 2014, the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) Panel on Transport (“the Panel”) discussed the Government’s paper on the outcome of the consultation with the driving instructor trade regarding the review on the issuing mechanism of Private Driving Instructors’ (“PDI”) licences and the way forward.

The Panel noted that there was no consensus in the driving instructor trade on the current mechanism for issuing new PDI licences due to divergent views on the issue. It passed a motion “urging the Government to adopt a phased approach and flexibly handle matters relating to the issuance of new licences for this year. At the same time, in order to better meet current social needs, it is incumbent for the Government to comprehensively review the existing driving training policy, including the grouping and the number of driving instructor

licences, and conditions imposed on Restricted Driving Instructors (“RDI”), etc.”. The Administration’s response is set out below.

The Government adopts a two-pronged approach for driver training policy. On the one hand, we promote off-street driver training through the establishment of designated driving schools to reduce traffic congestion caused by on-street driver training. On the other hand, we maintain a sufficient supply of PDIs for on-street driver training provided that such activities will not aggravate the traffic situation or cause road safety concerns. Given the limited road space in Hong Kong, we consider it necessary to maintain the two-pronged approach for providing driver training to the public.

The existing grouping of PDI licences was drawn up after careful consideration of the driver training skills for each group of vehicles. The current benchmarks of the three groups of PDI licences (i.e. 1 050 for Group 1, 130 for Group 2 and 230 for Group 3)<sup>1</sup> are also the agreement with the trade under the comprehensive review completed in 1999. When Transport Department (“TD”) recently consulted the trade on the nine options for revising the issuing mechanism for new PDI licences, most of the PDI associations supported maintaining the prevailing benchmarks for PDI licences of the three groups.

The mechanism of issuing PDI licences and the conditions to be imposed on RDI licences are stipulated in the law. Any proposed changes will not only require thorough discussion and a consensus among the stakeholders but also the approval of the amendments to the relevant provisions in the law by LegCo. TD will continue to closely liaise with the relevant stakeholders to assist in their arriving at a trade consensus, without which it would be difficult to take any new proposal(s) forward. We will then consult the Panel again on our thinking in the light of the trade’s view.

As regards the number of new PDI licences to be issued this year, we reported at the Panel meeting on 19 July 2013 that based on the outcome of the 2012 review, the Commissioner for Transport (“the

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<sup>1</sup> Group 1 - private cars and light goods vehicles;  
Group 2 - public light buses, private light buses, public buses and private buses;  
Group 3 - medium goods vehicles, heavy goods vehicles and articulated vehicles.

Commissioner”) had decided to issue a total of 287 new PDI licences (including 212, 32 and 43 licences for Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 respectively) which were in much demand. Please see Paper CB(1)1512/12-13(02). According to legal advice, the announcement by the Commissioner in July 2013 to issue a specified number of the PDI licences has created a legitimate expectation among members of the public including the trade that the said number of licences would be issued without further delay. As such, in order to avoid any legal challenge, it is not advisable for the Commissioner to issue new PDI licences the numbers of which differ from those specified in the said Panel paper. TD will invite applications for new PDI licences in the third quarter of 2014 as reported at the Panel meeting on 25 March 2014. It is expected that the first batch of new PDI licences will be issued in the fourth quarter of 2014.

Separately, TD will continue to review the number of PDI licences on a biennial basis. The next review is scheduled for the end of this year. TD will also maintain close liaison with the trade to facilitate their deliberation of the matter.

Yours sincerely,

( Niki KWOK )

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

**c.c.**

Commissioner for Transport

(Attn: Mr Patrick WONG)