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23 August 2018

Mr. Daniel SIN
Clerk, Panel on
Information Technology and Broadcasting
Legislative Council
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr. SIN,

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

I refer to your letter of 10 August 2018.

According to the professional advice from the Department of Health (“DH”), the radiofrequency electromagnetic fields generated by radio base stations (“RBS”) is a type of non-ionising radiation (“NIR”), which differs greatly from ionising radiation such as X-rays and nuclear radiation. Simply put, NIR has lower energy and is insufficient to change the chemical properties of substances. It cannot cause harm by breaking chemical bonds in the human body. In addition, the strength of NIR decreases rapidly with distance from the source.

The Communications Authority (“CA”) is the telecommunications regulatory institution in Hong Kong. In order to ensure the radiation safety of radio installations, the CA, in consultation with the DH, has adopted the NIR limits recommended in the “Guidelines for Limiting Exposure to Time-varying Electric, Magnetic, and Electromagnetic Fields” (“the Guidelines”) issued by the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (“ICNIRP”) as the radiation safety standards.

ICNIRP is an independent scientific commission and the Guidelines have been endorsed by the World Health Organization (“WHO”). According to WHO, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that exposure to NIR below the exposure limits recommended in the Guidelines would cause any adverse health effects. The ICNIRP limits or similar requirements are widely adopted by developed economies such as the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Australia and New Zealand; and by economies with dense population such as Singapore, Japan and Korea.

In order to provide good telecommunications network coverage, mobile network operators (MNOs) have to install RBS in different areas. MNOs also need to apply to the CA in accordance with its licence terms before bringing their RBS into use. As the executive arm of the CA, the Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”), apart from examining the radiation level of individual RBS in an application, will also conduct technical assessments of the total radiation level of all RBS installed at the same location when vetting the application to ensure that the total radiation level complies with the radiation safety standards before granting approval.

According to OFCA’s records, the relevant RBS installed at the rooftop of Hong Kong Football Association at 55 Fat Kwong Street, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon mentioned in the submissions referred to in your letter have obtained the CA’s approval since 2002. Upon residents’ requests, OFCA also conducted on-site NIR measurements in June and July 2018 in a number of premises in One Homantin, which is a new residential

estate available for occupation this year. All the measurement results show that the RBS concerned comply with the technical requirements and radiation safety standard adopted by the CA as mentioned above. As such, there is no ground for OFCA to require the MNOs concerned to make adjustment in the operation or set-up of the existing concerned RBS.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Crystal Chiou', written in a cursive style.

(Crystal CHIU)

for Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

c.c. Director-General of Communications (Att: Mr Eric Fung)