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(By fax no: 2543 9197)
19 January 2021

The Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

(Attn.: Ms. Maggie CHUNG)

Dear Ms. CHUNG,

**Follow-up to Public Accounts Committee Report No. 61
Management of Roadside Skips**

I refer to your letter dated 6 January 2021 to the Secretary for the Environment. I am authorized to provide the response.

2. The Government is also very concerned about the safety threats that roadside skips may pose to drivers/road users. As set out in the previous Government Minutes, the Government has set up a Joint Working Group on Management of Roadside Skips¹ (the “JWG”) to coordinate the work of various Departments to enhance the management and control of roadside skips. The main objective is to improve road safety. As a result, during the period of 2016 – 2019, there was a progressive downward trend of traffic accidents involving roadside skips. Number of traffic accidents involving roadside skips with personal injury dropped to 0 in 2019 (see **Annex**). The Government will

¹ The JWG is led by the Environment Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) and comprises the Development Bureau, Transport and Housing Bureau, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”), the Highways Department (“HyD”), the Hong Kong Police Force (“HKPF”), the Lands Department (“LandsD”), the Transport Department (“TD”), and the Home Affairs Department (on a need basis).

continue the efforts.

3. As to progress of the various initiatives and measures, since 2017, the JWG has been providing two short-term tenancy (“STT”) sites in Tseung Kwan O and Tuen Mun² for the skip trade to store idling skips. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the JWG has arranged 11 joint enforcement operations in 2020 to tackle the placement of idling skips at black spots, covering Kowloon Bay, Kai Tak and Chai Wan areas. Through these joint actions, the malpractice of indiscriminate placement of skips at these locations has been largely under control. The JWG will continue to closely monitor the situation through regular patrols and will mount further joint enforcement operations at these black spots as necessary.

4. To formulate the strategy to enhance the management of skip operations, the JWG has engaged a consultant to explore the setting up of a voluntary skips management system. The consultant has recommended the Government to implement a “Certification Scheme for Skips” (Certification Scheme), a “Registration Scheme for Skip Operators” (Registration Scheme) and a “Charter Scheme for Skip Users” (Charter Scheme) to facilitate the trade’s compliance with government requirements and guidelines. The JWG is currently taking forward these recommendations.

5. Regarding the progress and effectiveness of the surveillance camera systems at Muk On Street and Shing Tai Road as requested in paragraphs 2(a) of your letter, please be informed that a surveillance camera system has been installed at Muk On Street, Kai Tak in June 2020. The situation has been significantly improved in which only one isolated case of roadside skip was identified through the surveillance camera system and immediately tackled on the same day by the enforcement department. As for Shing Tai Road, Chai Wan, though the surveillance camera installation proposal was suggested at the last term of the Eastern District Council (DC), the DC member of the respective constituency relayed local residents’ concerns and requested the JWG to suspend the proposal. We would continue to explore other suitable trial locations.

6. Regarding the information requested in paragraph 2(b) – 2(e) of your letter, please be informed that the Certification Scheme has already been rolled out in November 2020, with a briefing arranged to the relevant trades to facilitate the skip operators in applying for certification of their new skips or in-use skips retrofitted with the specified fixtures. The briefing also covered the forthcoming Registration Scheme and Charter Scheme which will be

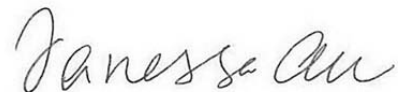
² The two short-term tenancy sites in Tseung Kwan O Area 137 and Siu Lang Shui in Tuen Mun commenced their operations in January and December 2017 respectively.

launched progressively with the increasing number of certified skips in the market.

7. To enable the skips operators to gain the know-how and experience in retrofitting their in-use skips, the JWG had conducted a trial to retrofit 30 in-use skips with fixtures that meet the road safety requirements as set by the Transport Department and the environmental nuisance prevention requirements. The trial has also finalized the design of fixtures from durability, operability and functionality angles taking into account the trade's concerns. The JWG would continue to facilitate the trade in retrofitting the in-use skips and obtaining certification under the Certification Scheme.

8. Taking into account the effectiveness and progress of the above measures and the experience gained from the voluntary skips management system upon full implementation of the aforesaid three Schemes, the JWG will review whether a new regulatory system would still be required to regulate the skip operations in the long run. The JWG will also explore to provide financial assistance to the trade in retrofitting the skips, so as to increase the number of certified skips in the market.

Yours sincerely,



(Vanessa Au)

for Director of Environmental Protection

c.c.

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Number of traffic accidents involving roadside skips and resulted in personal injuries in 2016-2019

Year	Number of traffic accidents involving roadside skips with personal injury	Number of casualties
2016	4	6
2017	3	5
2018	1	1
2019	0	0