

香港特別行政區政府  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

規劃環境地政局  
Letterhead of PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & LANDS BUREAU  
香港花園道美利大廈  
MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG

OUR REF.: (80) in PELB(E) 55/03/117(98)Pt.34

YOUR REF.:

Tel : 2848 2955  
Fax : 2530 5264

14 January 1999

Miss Odelia Leung  
Clerk to Panel  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central Hong Kong

Fax : 2877 8024

**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs**  
**Follow up to meeting on 8 January 1999**

At the last meeting of the Environmental Affairs Panel held on 8 January 1999, Members requested the Administration to provide, among other matters, an account of the outcome of the meeting held on 11 January 1999 between the Administration and the representatives of the waste paper trade. This letter sets out the gist of the discussion. I apologise that we have not been able to meet your deadline and translate this letter.

The Administration was represented by Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau and Environmental Protection Department. The trade was represented by the Hong Kong Environmental and Recycle Association, Hong Kong Waste Paper Trade Association and Future Safe.

During previous discussions with the representatives from the waste paper trade, we have agreed to set up a working group to identify measures which might help tackle the waste paper problem and at the same time help in the operation of the trade. The meeting of 11 January 1999 was the first meeting of the Working Group. A copy of the membership and terms of reference, at the Annex, was discussed at some length and agreed.

At the request of the trade, the Administration explained the criteria used to assess the waste trade's proposals for assistance, and the position on the various requests put to the Administration. The Administration agreed to put this in writing after the meeting.

In summary, the Administration's response was as follows:

- ◆ Many of the requests involved direct Government subsidy or involvement in the operation of the sector. They were contrary to existing policies and cannot be accepted.
- ◆ Provision of land on a short-term basis, at concessionary rates for waste collection and recycling operations, could be considered. Some possible sites have been identified, and site visits could be arranged for the trade. The Environmental Protection Department will continue to look for other suitable sites.
- ◆ The Administration was prepared to consider providing cages or bins for collecting recyclable material.
- ◆ The proposed reduction of berthing or other Public Cargo Handling Area charges, and other statutory fees and charges, involved changes in legislation. Even if policy support was obtained, such proposals could be implemented only in the medium to long term because of the lengthy procedures required.
- ◆ For areas which the trade wished to pursue, the trade should put up more specific proposals for Government's deliberation. It was not appropriate for Government to formulate detailed recommendations which it would then have to "consider", although PELB/EPD would be happy to advise on some of the procedural issues and give other guidance.
- ◆ It was stressed that, for equity's sake, any site made available for waste handling should be accessible to all sectors of the trade.

In response, representatives from the waste paper sector made the following points:

- ◆ Government should set up a fund to finance the operation of the centralised waste handling facility, including providing interfacing, machinery and ancillary facilities. Government could finance the project as a pilot scheme. Government should develop the details of how to implement the centralised waste handling facility based on the outline proposal submitted by the waste paper trade.
- ◆ It was not enough for Government just to provide sites. The waste paper operators could not afford to invest in machinery or building

works to start new operations. Further financial support from Government was necessary.

- ◆ While the trade agreed to look at the sites identified for waste collection or recycling operations, it said Government should search for sites with water frontage. Smaller sites could also be useful for smaller scale trading operations.
- ◆ Government should view waste paper collection or recycling as a social service rather than commercial or industrial operations as they helped reduce the volume of waste that would otherwise have to be landfilled at public expense. In this context, Government should pay the waste paper sector the amount paid to landfill operators for every tonne of waste paper handled;
- ◆ Although disappointed with Government's position on direct assistance, the trade was prepared to continue with the dialogue. They requested to meet with relevant departments at the following meetings. They requested to meet Marine Department and Industry Department to discuss issues like waiving berthing charges and loans for the waste paper collectors and recyclers.

The meeting was constructive in helping to clarify further the position and the demands from the sector. The Administration's position remains that direct subsidy on the operation of the waste collection and recycling operations is not appropriate. Nevertheless, we will continue to maintain close dialogue with the trade representatives to further explore the viability of providing concessionary land and to identify other acceptable measures that could assist the sector while achieving the overall objectives of waste reduction in the long term.

(Steve Barclay)  
for Secretary for Planning,  
Environment and Lands

cc DEP (Attn : Mr John Rockey) 2872 0603

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**Working Group on Recycling Trade**

**A. Terms of Reference**

1. To liaise with the waste recycling trade and consider how the objectives of the WRFP can be achieved
2. To examine whether any assistance from Government is justified and necessary
3. To facilitate coordination with policy bureaux and departments

**B. Membership**

Environmental Protection Department

Principal Environmental Protection Officer - P(FP)

Senior Environmental Protection Officer - S(FP)1

Environmental Protection Officer - E(FP)5

Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau

Recycling Trade Representatives - Collectors, Recyclers and Exporters

**C. In Attendance**

Representatives from bureaux, departments and other parties on ad-hoc basis.

**D. Frequency**

Meetings will be convened on an as needed basis.