

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2578/99-00
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration and
cleared with the Chairman)

Ref : CB2/PL/EA+TP

**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs and
LegCo Panel on Transport**
Minutes of Joint Meeting
held on Friday, 23 June 2000 at 9 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

**Members
Present**

: Panel on Environmental Affairs

Hon Christine LOH (Chairman)

* Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP

Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP

Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong

* Hon CHAN Wing-chan

Hon WONG Yung-kan

* Hon LAU Kong-wah

(Deputy Chairman of the LegCo Panel on Transport)

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

* Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

* Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP

Panel on Transport

+ Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)

Hon LEE Wing-tat

Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP

Hon CHAN Kam-lam

Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP

Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

(* Also members of the LegCo Panel on Transport)

(+Also members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental
Affairs)

- Members** : Panel on Environmental Affairs
Absent
- Hon HUI Cheung-ching (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Hon Margaret NG
Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP
Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
- Panel on Transport
- Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, SBS, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon FUNG Chi-kin
- Members** : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Attending
- Public Officers** : Mrs Lily YAM
Attending Secretary for the Environment and Food
- Mr Thomas CHOW
Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food
- Mr Howard CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment
and Food (C)
- Mr Rob LAW
Director of Environmental Protection
- Mr TSE Chin-wan
Assistant Director (Air),
Environmental Protection Department
- Miss Margaret FONG
Deputy Secretary for Transport
- Mrs Judy LI WU Wai-lok
Assistant Commissioner (Ferry and Paratransit)
Transport Department

Mr Thomas THUMB
Assistant Commissioner (Transport Planning)
Transport Department

Miss Angela LUK
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health and Welfare

Dr Cindy LAI
Principal Medical and Health Officer
Health Department

Mr I J STENTON
Chief Superintendent of Police (Traffic)
Hong Kong Police Force

Mr FU Tai-pun
Chief Engineer/Gas Production & Supply
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr WONG Sek-cheung
Senior Engineer/Gas Systems
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr Simon WONG
Senior Staff Officer (Dutiable Commodities Administration)
Customs and Excise Department

Clerk in Attendance : Mrs Constance LI
Chief Assistant Secretary (2) 2

Staff in Attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1) 2

Ms Alice AU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1) 5

Miss Betty MA
Senior Assistant Secretary (2) 1

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Miss Christine LOH was elected Chairman of the joint meeting.

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I. Follow up discussion on control of vehicle emissions

[Paper Nos. CB(2)1948/99-00(01), CB(2)2073/99-00(01) and CB(2)2280/99-00(01)]

2. The Chairman said that the meeting was convened to continue discussion of the measures to control vehicle emissions. She then invited questions from members.

Vehicle maintenance

3. Mrs Miriam LAU commented that proper vehicle maintenance was essential to reducing harmful vehicle emissions. She enquired about the Administration's progress in requiring motor traders and large vehicle maintenance operators to provide service manuals and technical data for maintenance purposes. She also asked about the progress of establishing a database on vehicle maintenance information by the Vocational Training Council (VTC).

4. Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food (DS/EF) said that the Government understood the importance of engine maintenance in reducing vehicle emission and was implementing a number of measures to enhance the overall standard of the vehicle maintenance trade. To this end, training courses had been organised by VTC for some 750 vehicle mechanics on ways to tackle emission problems of diesel vehicles and to conduct dynamometer tests. The Environment Protection Department (EPD) would continue to organize seminars and workshops for the transport industry and vehicle mechanics on proper vehicle maintenance and reducing vehicle smoke emissions to acceptable limits.

5. Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment and Food (C) (PAS(EF)C) added that VTC was now collecting information for setting up a database on vehicle maintenance. He understood that the database would be made available for public access at the VTC library and on the Internet. In response to Mrs Miriam LAU's further queries, PAS(EF)C said that the Working Group on Vehicle Maintenance Services (the Working Group) would provide assistance to VTC, if necessary, for establishing the database as soon as practicable. The database would provide all relevant information on vehicle maintenance for both diesel and petrol vehicles.

6. Mrs Miriam LAU expressed concern that the service manuals were still not available despite the fact that motor traders had long before indicated that they would release these information to the vehicle maintenance trade. She pointed out that from 1 November 2000, private petrol vehicles with six-year service would be required to undergo smoke emission test in the annual roadworthiness inspection. The maintenance trade was therefore very concerned about the availability of service manuals and maintenance

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information for these vehicles.

7. Deputy Secretary for Transport (DS/T) said that the Motor Traders Association and the Service Managers Association had already agreed to provide necessary information for the maintenance of pre-EURO diesel vehicles. The Working Group would follow up with vehicle suppliers on the release of other relevant information for Euro models at a meeting in the afternoon.

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8. The Chairman advised the Administration to provide a written response to the Panel after discussion with the Motor Traders Association.

Impact on health

9. Mr LAU Kong-wah referred to the estimated cost of \$3.8 billion on medical expenses and productivity loss based on the preliminary findings of the two health studies conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) in 1996/97 and the University of Hong Kong (HKU) in 1997/98. He questioned whether the small savings of \$880 million by 2005 would justify the substantial expenditure for implementing the comprehensive control programme to improve air quality. He asked whether the Administration could provide an updated estimate on the improved morbidity and mortality rates in 2005 as a result of the target reduction of 80% of respirable suspended particulates (RSP) and 30% of nitrogen oxides.

10. Assistant Director of Environment Protection (Air) (ADEP(A)) clarified that the estimated cost of and savings in medical expenses and productivity loss were rough estimates based on available data. He pointed out that there were other factors such as ambient air quality which would have impact on local air quality. He said that improvements in mortality and morbidity rates would only be observed over a relatively long period of time.

11. The Chairman asked whether the Administration could provide an analysis on the reduction in medical costs and economic loss for 2005 taking into account the various vehicular control measures being introduced. DS(EF) said that there were no readily available figures or simple formula for such analysis but the Administration could consider whether it could provide a forecast on the improvements by 2005 based on the 1999 level. He explained that the target reduction in RSP and nitrogen oxide was an objective rather than a performance pledge. The Working Group was also considering a package of measures including control on vehicle growth and road use as a means to further reduce vehicular emissions. As regards medical costs as a result of deteriorating air quality, he advised that such costs would require continued commitment by the society for some time.

12. Ir Raymond HO considered that the Administration should strive to

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explain the basis or assumptions of its forecast on anticipated benefits or savings as a result of the implementation of various control measures. The Chairman also suggested the Administration conduct scenario modelling for its analysis.

13. Mr Andrew CHENG requested information on the projected reduction in the number of deaths and hospital admissions resulting from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases after the introduction of the air pollution control initiatives. He also asked about the cost of the consultancy study.

14. ADEP(A) reiterated that the consultant had conducted a preliminary study based on limited data from the previous two studies conducted by the CUHK and HKU. However, the consultancy report had indicated that rather significant economic cost was attributable to health effects caused by ambient air pollution and that the public did attach significant economic values to such diseases avoidance. In view of the many assumptions and limitations of the study, the consultant had recommended that a more comprehensive study should be conducted to give an overall picture of the situation, for development of more effective air pollution management schemes in the future. The consultancy study was the first of its kind and the cost incurred was not significant.

15. Principal Medical and Health Officer briefly explained the methodology adopted by the consultant for estimation of the reduction in economic cost by 2005. In brief, the evaluation was based on composite score by cost-of-illness and willingness-to-pay estimates for the number of morbidity and mortality resulting from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases which were attributable to air pollution.

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16. In response to members' concerns, DS(EF) undertook to provide an analysis on the effectiveness, together with the rationale of such analysis, of the proposed control measures in reducing medical and social costs by 2005.

Comprehensive control of vehicle emissions

17. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern about the impact of other air pollutants such as hydrocarbons, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide which could be generated by petrol vehicles. He asked whether Government had a long-term comprehensive plan to reduce air pollution. In this connection, he asked whether Government would consider extending the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to other vehicles including some 73 000 light vans and light goods vehicles.

18. ADEP(A) explained the computation of the local air pollution index (API). He advised that as there was relatively a greater number of diesel vehicles in Hong Kong, the three major air pollutants in Hong Kong were RSP,

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nitrogen dioxide and ozone. According to past API records, the concentration of sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide in Hong Kong was much lower than that in other countries. Moreover, the Administration had implemented measures to reduce the emission of benzene and was considering the introduction of enhanced hydrocarbon recovery systems to control the level of hydrocarbons arising from vehicle refilling. While the concentration of ozone in Hong Kong only exceeded the prescribed limit on a few days, the Administration would keep a close watch on the situation and would discuss with the Guangdong authorities on ways to control the regional concentration of ozone.

19. On import of cleaner alternatives, DS/EF said that the supply of vehicles was determined by the manufacturers and that Government had no intention to restrict the import of diesel vehicles including light vans and light goods vehicles. However, Government had taken proactive steps to encourage the use of cleaner fuels and vehicles to replace the existing diesel vehicles. These included encouraging the use of LPG, ultra-low sulphur diesel (ULSD) and cleaner vehicles such as hybrid vehicles which used combined diesel and petrol, and electric motors. Other administrative measures to accelerate replacement of old vehicles and phasing out of light diesel vehicles would also be considered. He added that Government would need to evaluate the effectiveness of the trial scheme of LPG and electric light buses and further consult the industry and parties concerned on full implementation. In response to the Chairman's further enquiry, DS(EF) stressed that Government adopted a gradual approach in controlling vehicle emissions. Government would consider all possible options and implement the comprehensive control programme on vehicle emission by phases in consultation with the trade.

20. Mrs Miriam LAU enquired about the progress of promoting alternative fuels such as the LPG and ULSD to facilitate the phasing out of some 73 000 light diesel vehicles in the long run. She suggested that the Government should speed up the evaluation on the trial of diesel catalysts, provide incentives for owners of both pre-EURO and EURO diesel vehicles to use appropriate particulate traps or diesel catalysts, and work out long-term strategy to encourage replacement of old vehicles with more environmentally friendly models.

21. DS/EF responded that the Administration had proposed a number of measures to alleviate air pollution and the resolution encouraging the use of ULSD would be considered by LegCo next week. He stressed that apart from cost-effectiveness considerations, the Administration would have to consider the views of the stakeholders and seek the support of the community before taking a decision on introducing cleaner alternative fuelled vehicles or technologies for different categories of vehicles. The Working Group was considering a number of incentives for replacement of old vehicles and would consult the trade and the Panel in due course.

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22. Mrs Miriam LAU enquired about the timetable for consultation with the industry on extending LPG vehicles to light buses and other vehicles, as well as the findings of the risk evaluation studies on LPG vehicles.

23. Secretary for the Environment and Food (SEF) responded that the Administration had been working hard on various measures and would consult the affected parties once a firm proposal had been drawn up. She pointed out that the Task Force had held a number of meetings with a view to speeding up its work. The Panel would be consulted when concrete plans were available.

24. ADEP(A) supplemented that a number of supporting measures such as the provision of sufficient filling stations would have to be planned before extending the use of LPG to other vehicles. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department would seek funding approval to conduct a more detailed risk evaluation study to examine the feasibility of extending LPG to other categories of vehicles.

25. Dr LAW Chi-kwong asked about the progress in promoting the use of fuel cell technology for light buses. He held the view that the Administration should leave it to the market to determine whether similar environmental friendly technologies should be used by the industry.

26. DS/EF responded that the Government was open-minded and would consider introducing incentive schemes to encourage the trial and introduction of vehicles using new fuels or technologies. He pointed out that a preparatory committee comprising representatives from relevant bureaux and departments, the light bus trade and academics had been established to work out arrangements for the trial of alternative fuelled light buses. The trial had commenced and a monitoring committee had been established to monitor the progress and gather relevant data for future development. The Task Force would review the results of the trial scheme and would recommend proposed way forward for further consultation with the trade and the Panel.

27. Mrs Miriam LAU pointed out that there were many complaints about the high cost of LPG and inadequate supporting facilities for LPG light buses. She suggested that Government should continue to explore the use of other alternative fuels for the trade.

28. The Chairman suggested that the Government should give a free hand to the industry in the use of alternative fuels which met the prescribed standards and requirements. DS/EF responded that the Administration welcomed the use of alternative fuels which were environmentally friendly.

29. The Chairman also suggested the Administration to consider imposing mandatory AQO which were currently specified in the Air Pollution Control

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Admin Ordinance. DS/EF undertook to consider the suggestion.

Fixed penalty on smoky vehicles

30. Mr LAU Kong-wah enquired whether the increased number of prosecution and the increase of the fixed penalty from \$450 to \$1,000 for smoky vehicles could effectively improve air quality and reduce smoke emission.

31. DS/EF said that strengthened enforcement and a higher level of penalty fine would definitely contribute to the reduction of smoky vehicles on the road. SEF added that the effectiveness of the heavier penalty against smoky vehicles would have to be examined together with other measures such as the use of ULSD. In response to Mr LAU, Chief Superintendent of Police (Traffic) clarified that the number of fixed penalty tickets issued in the year 1999 should be 5 816 instead of 5 095 in Annex B of the Administration's paper [Paper No.CB(2)2280/99-00(02)]. He added that the number of fixed penalty tickets and summonses issued from January to April 2000 were 1911 and 187 respectively.

32. Mr LAU Kong-wah reminded the Administration to strengthen enforcement against the illegal import and use of marked oil. DS(EF) noted the comments.

Other issues

33. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Chief Executive had provided a written response to the recommendations put forward by the All Party Working Group on Clean Air. She said that Mr Edward HO, convenor of the All Party Working Group on Clean Air, would write to the Chief Executive requesting him to follow up the proposed measures to reduce air pollution in the 2000 Policy Address.

34. The Chairman also tabled for members' reference a copy of the report produced by the Citizens Party on "Cleaning the Air - Still A Long Way To Go".

[*Posting-meeting note* : A copy of the report was issued to absent members vide paper no. CB(2)2460/99-00(01).]

35. The meeting ended at 11:00 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

6 September 2000