

**For information  
on 23 May 2000**

**Legislative Council  
Panels on Environmental Affairs and Transport**

**Comprehensive Control of Diesel Vehicle Emissions**

At the last meeting of the Joint Panel on 12 May 2000, members asked the Administration to provide the following supplementary information :

- (a) the Administration's response to the 16 recommendations of the Legislative Council All Party Clean Air Alliance Working Group;
  - (b) whether the Administration would consider a demerit system for drivers and increasing the penalty to above \$1,000 for repeated offences to give more deterrence against smoky vehicles;
  - (c) timeframe for standardization of emission tests by Transport Department and Environmental Protection Department;
  - (d) whether Secretary for Health and Welfare or his representative would be included in the Task Force on air pollution control;
  - (e) the impact of vehicle emissions and poor air quality on public health; and
  - (f) clarification on the basis of the calculation of 7,920 vehicle refilling capacity by the end of this year as mentioned in paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper on LPG taxi scheme.
2. The information requested is set out in the following paragraphs.

## **Recommendations by the All Party Clean Air Alliance Working Group**

3. The recommendations were discussed at a meeting between the Chief Executive and the Working Group. We will be sending the Working Group a written reply very shortly.

## **Demerit system for drivers and heavier penalties for repeat offenders**

4. It is the responsibility of the owner of a vehicle to ensure that his vehicle is properly maintained at all times. This is why owners of smoky vehicles are now liable to payment of fixed penalty given out by the Police. It is therefore not appropriate to introduce a demerit points system to cover drivers who do not own the vehicles. If we are to introduce such a system on the owner of the vehicle, there will be enforcement problems as not all vehicle owners have a driving licence. This is particularly so for commercial diesel vehicles the majority of which are registered in company names. As regards drivers who do own the vehicles, the present system already ensures that the vehicles which fail the smoke tests administered by the Environmental Protection Department subsequent to the issue of the fixed penalty ticket will be delicensed.

5. The Administration is considering a number of proposals that will deter repeat offenders, including the proposal of a stepped fixed penalty system the implementation of which will require legislative amendments. We will revert to the Legislative Council on this in its next session.

## **Timeframe for standardization of the emission tests**

6. We will report on this item at the Joint Panel meeting.

## **Representation of Secretary for Health and Welfare in Task Force**

7. The Secretary for Health and Welfare is represented on the Task Force.

## **Impact of Vehicle Emissions and Poor Air Quality on Public Health**

8. There is clear evidence linking increased admissions to hospital for cardio-pulmonary illness to high pollution incidents. The major concern to the medical community is the persistently high levels of respirable suspended particulate and increasing levels of nitrogen dioxide. It is likely that these are linked to widespread endemic bronchitic symptoms in children.

9. As yet, there have been no studies of the long-term health effects of air pollution on people in low risk categories (i.e., non-smokers) in Hong Kong. However, studies in the USA have shown strong association between exposure to particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and ozone and non-accidental death specifically from respiratory disease and lung cancer.

10. The annual cost in medical expenses and loss of productivity resulting from air pollution has been calculated at \$3.8 billion.

### **Calculation of the 7,920 Vehicle Refilling Capacity by end 2000**

11. The trial of LPG taxis shows that it will take an LPG nozzle about 5 minutes to fill up an empty tank of a taxi. Each LPG nozzle can therefore refill 12 vehicles per hour. During the peak shift-change hours of taxis between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., each nozzle can refill about 36 vehicles. It is estimated that 40% of taxis are refilled during off-peak hours. The vehicle refilling capacity per nozzle is therefore 60 vehicles per day.

12. By end of 2000, the LPG filling network would have at least 12 LPG filling stations with a total of 132 nozzles. The vehicle refilling capacity is therefore estimated to be  $60 \times 132 = 7,920$  vehicles.

Environment and Food Bureau  
May 2000