

**Letterhead of ERALDA INDUSTRIES LTD.**

November 15, 1999

The Hon Lau Chin-shek, JP  
Chairman of the Manpower Panel  
c/o Legislative Council Secretariat  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

To: Fax 2877 8024

Re: Incidental Driving Duties for Foreign Domestic Helpers

I write in support of the case for allowing FDH to continue to exercise their driving duties in addition to their main function as a domestic helper.

My circumstances. Both my wife and myself both 80 years of age, Hong Kong residents for over 50 years. My wife has a back problem, unable to drive and has to be taken for treatment 4 times weekly. I am fully employed in my duties at Eralda Industries and use public transport whenever possible. Apart from my commercial activities, I am a Past Chairman of the Urban Council. Served on many Advisory Boards and Committees. Currently member of the Hong Kong Port and Maritime Board, Employers' Federation etc.

We are conscious of our civic responsibilities and understand local drivers may feel they are being usurped by foreign helpers. However the large and growing number of domestic helpers has become an integral part of Hong Kong's burgeoning economy enabling families to fully partake in its economic life. Without domestic helpers, thousands of households in Hong Kong would become bereft, and result in a substantial loss to Hong Kong's economic well being.

Is this the thin end of the wedge? Driving duties today. Domestic duties tomorrow? If so organized labour is on a slippery and dangerous slope that will seriously divide this community. Is this what you wish to initiate?

I submit, allowing the present situation to continue will meet with universal approbation, have only a minimal effect on the labour situation, and gain much esteem for your manpower panel's sense of justice and common sense.

Kind regards

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H M G Forsgate, CBE, JP