

Information Paper for Legislative Council

Panel on Planning, Lands, and Works

Water Supply to the Remaining Remote Villages in the New Territories

Supplementary Information

Introduction

In considering the Panel paper on “Water Supply to Remaining Remote Villages in the New Territories”, the following additional information is requested:

- (a) The public expenditure involved in each of the past three years, including the costs incurred by Food and Environment Hygiene Department (FEHD) to monitor the water quality of the streamcourses and incurred by Water Supplies Department (WSD) to provide assistance to the villagers.
- (b) On collecting and testing water samples from the streamcourses.
 - (i) the frequency of testing in each of the past three years and the problems identified; and
 - (ii) the frequency of testing from 2003-04 onwards.
- (c) The number of occasions in each of past three years in which the streamcourses dried out, and the assistance provided by WSD to the villagers concerned.
- (d) The time when the Administration would review the need for supplying water to the 19 remote villages.

The Administration's Responses

Public Expenditure for Water Quality Monitoring of Streamcourses

2. The public expenditure involved in each of the past three years incurred by FEHD and WSD for monitoring the water quality of the local streamcourses is as follows:

(The estimates were based on staff costs and other costs associated with water quality monitoring and testing.)

	<u>2000/01</u>	<u>2001/02</u>	<u>2002/03</u>
FEHD	\$381,400	\$396,700	\$352,300
WSD	\$37,700	\$64,400	\$59,900

Over the past 3 years, WSD has provided assistance to Tin Fu Tsai village when the streamcourse dried out. The total cost incurred in providing water wagons was \$7,000.

Collecting and Testing of Water Samples

3. To determine whether the water quality of the local water sources is suitable for potable use, the water samples were subject to water analysis, chemical analysis and bacteriological analysis. The frequency was about once in 3 to 9 months for the first two types of analyses. Bacteriological analysis was carried out once in 1 to 2 months. Similar testing frequency will be maintained from 2003-04 onwards. In the past two years, bacteriological analysis revealed that E Coli was present in some water samples from some of the villages. The presence of E Coli indicates possible contamination. The direct consumption of contaminated water without proper treatment may result in human infection and is considered not acceptable. For these villages, villagers have been advised to disinfect and boil the water before drinking. Appropriate warning signs have been erected to remind the villagers. The Administration will continue to monitor water quality of the remote villages without government water supplies.

Drying out of Local Streamcourses

4. Over the 3 years from 2000 to 2002, Home Affairs Department (HAD) received reports about drying out of streamcourses in Tin Fu Tsai of Tuen Mun District, and Tai Chuen (on Lantau Island) of Tsuen Wan District. On the villagers' request, WSD provided assistance to Tin Fu Tsai by sending water wagons there for three days. The villagers in Tai Chuen did not ask for assistance for that occasion, which only lasted for a few days, and the demand, being very small, was met by the water stored up.

Review on Need for Water Supply Schemes

5. The need for water supply to the 19 remaining villages will be reviewed when there is development near these villages rendering the provision of treated water supply more economical or other new circumstances warrant reconsideration of the schemes, such as the deterioration of the water quality to an unacceptable level. The situation will be kept under review by the relevant departments.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
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