

23 May 2003

**To: Panel on Environmental Affairs, Legislative Council**

Chairman: Hon CHOY So-yuk

Deputy Chairman: Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan

Members: Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP

Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP

Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP

Hon SIN Chung-kai

Hon WONG Yung-kan

Hon LAU Kong-wah

Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP

Dr Hon LO Wing-lok

Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Dear Honorary Members,

**Proposed Landfill Charging Scheme**

We, the undersigned groups are writing to support the long-awaited landfill charging scheme in Hong Kong. We urge members of the Legislative Council to support this scheme after debating for 10 years.

Hong Kong is one of the very few advanced economies which does not charge on waste disposal at landfills. Currently the taxpayers are paying more than 700 million per year (for both capital and operational costs) on solid waste disposal at the three strategic landfills, about half of which are construction and demolition (C&D) wastes disposed of by construction contractors. The subsidy of taxpayers' money on construction contractors is unfair and grossly violates the 'Polluters Pay Principle'.

We support the proposed three-tier charging scheme on C&D wastes which can provide incentives for waste minimization, sorting and recycling. The scheme has also addressed most, if not all of the concerns of waste haulers including suspended payment for haulers who have

concrete evidence showing their failure to collect the charges from waste producers. This kind of flexible arrangement is indeed rare among all government charges and waste haulers should consider this more than reasonable and support the scheme.

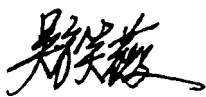
In addition to environmental benefits, the proposed scheme can have economic benefits in particular for waste haulers. The establishment of sorting facilities will increase demand for waste hauling between landfills, sorting facilities and public filling areas. The increase in demand will be about 10% and this will provide additional business opportunities to waste haulers who are suffering from reduced construction, demolition and renovation activities due to economic downturn.

Besides implementing landfill charging and establishing sorting facilities, the government should provide incentives for C & D waste reduction and sorting at source. Measures should be taken to create a market for recycled materials including government preferential procurement policy for such products.

Finally, we urge the government to implement landfill charging for municipal solid wastes as soon as possible. C&D wastes form only part of the disposable wastes in Hong Kong and the general public has an obligation to pay for the disposal of municipal wastes, in accordance with the 'Polluters Pay Principle'.

Please contact Mr Henry Ho, Environmental Affairs Manager of Friends of the Earth at 25285588 for any inquiries.

Yours sincerely



Mei Ng

Director of Friends of the Earth, on behalf of the following groups:

**Friends of the Earth**

**Green Power**

**Hong Kong Waste Management Association**

**WWF (Hong Kong)**

c.c. Ms Annie Choi, Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment, ETWB

Dr Ellen Chan, Assistant Director, Environmental Protection Department