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26 June 2003

Miss Flora Tai
Clerk to the Panel on Home Affairs
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Tai,

Outside Seating Accommodation (OSA)

At the LegCo Home Affairs Panel Meeting on 13 June 2003, Members expressed concern about the time needed for processing OSA applications and the constraints that the Government faces when processing such applications.

To enhance processing of OSA applications, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has been providing "one-stop" licensing service to OSA applicants. FEHD assigns a case manager to follow through the entire application process. FEHD also stages case conferences with collaborating departments with a view to expediting the processing of applications.

The average time for approving an application, including the time taken by applicants to comply with the licensing requirements, is around five months. In general, the applicants take about 3.5 months to do the necessary work to comply with the licensing requirements, and the departments concerned take about 1.5 months to process the applications. For straightforward cases such as those without land use problems coupled with applicants' positive attitude in meeting the requirements, the approval for OSA can be given within a shorter period. For instance, five approvals were given in some 1.5 months.

The main constraints of the OSA scheme are local objections, impact on pedestrian/vehicular traffic, land use compatibility, failure to submit revised plans and existence of unauthorized building works.

Please rest assured that FEHD will continue to provide proactive assistance for all OSA applications.

Yours sincerely,

(Chris Sun)
for Director of Home Affairs

c.c. DFEH (Attn.: Mr HUNG Chi-pai)