

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
LegCo Bills Committee on Waste Disposal (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2003

Summary of the HKIE's Views on the Bill

The HKIE supports the introduction of the proposed charging scheme. The objective of the charging scheme should not be generating revenue for the Government. A waste disposal charge is a vital part of an integrated waste management strategy for Hong Kong. Without which, there will be little incentive for waste producers (initially the construction industry) to minimise waste. The huge amount of waste being generated in Hong Kong daily needs immediate actions. We agree that the Government should implement the proposed charges urgently. In addition, charges for other types of wastes (commercial, industrial and domestic wastes) should also be implemented as soon as possible. We are of the view that the proposed charge will be an effective means to encourage waste reduction on construction sites.

We would also like to suggest that the Government should immediately action on the long delayed provision of alternative C&D waste management facilities other than landfills. Landfills should be used primarily for MSW and other difficult-to-manage waste types. However, without the provisions for recycling and disposal facilities for C&D waste, the initial charges should be set at a lower level; but when the facilities are sufficient, higher charges or even prohibition of dumping in landfills should be enforced.

The implementation of the charging scheme will also provide incentives for investments and development of a viable waste recycling industry (for examples the proposed C&D waste sorting facilities) in Hong Kong. This will also benefit Hong Kong by providing the much needed job opportunities.

We are of the view that the Government may not be suitable to be directly involved in the setting up and running of waste recycling facilities. The Government should however provide financial and other incentives (e.g. in the form of cheap land, loans and preferential procurement of the recycled materials) to encourage private investments in this endeavour.

We would also like to suggest, before the implementation of the proposed charging scheme, that a better co-ordination led by the Government on the provision and management of excavation and fill resources be made.

Our prime concern remains however on the lack of adequate action to see the implementation of incentives and assistance in the recycling industry; meanwhile the landfills are being revamped with C&D waste everyday. When the landfill charge is implemented, the risk of illegal dumping and fly tipping of C&D waste should be adequately addressed. It is essential that appropriate penalty provisions should be stipulated in laws and in public tender opportunities to penalise wrong doers. Also, a publicity campaign should be launched to raise the awareness of the general public to report any illegal dumping incident.