

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Panel on Environmental Affairs**

**Minutes of special meeting held on  
Wednesday 14 January 2004, at 9:40 am  
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon CHOY So-yuk (Chairman)  
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP  
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP  
Hon WONG Yung-kan  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP  
Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP  
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP
- Member attending** : Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- Members absent** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok, JP  
Hon LAU Ping-cheung  
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Public officers attending** : Environment, Transport and Works Bureau  
  
Dr Sarah LIAO  
Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works  
  
Ms Doris CHEUNG  
Deputy Secretary (Environment and Transport) E1  
  
Mr Thomas CHOW  
Deputy Secretary (Environment and Transport) E2

Action

**Clerk in attendance :** Miss Becky YU  
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

**Staff in attendance :** Ms Pauline NG  
Assistant Secretary General 1

Mrs Mary TANG  
Senior Council Secretary (1)2

Miss Mandy POON  
Legislative Assistant 4

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**I. Briefing by the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works on the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2004**

(The 2004 Policy Address

LC Paper No. CB(1) 756/03-04(01) — 2004 Policy Agenda - Policy Initiatives of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau)

The Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (SETW) explained the initiatives affecting the environmental portfolio of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau by highlighting the salient points in the information paper.

Waste management

2. Mr LAU Kong-wah noted with disappointment that the development of environmental industries had not been included in the policy initiatives of the environmental portfolio. He stressed the need to promote these industries in an attempt to create more job opportunities for unskilled workers. He then enquired about the progress of the wet-and-dry waste sorting pilot scheme since its success would result in creation of jobs.

3. The Chairman declared interest as the organizer of the pilot scheme.

4. SETW affirmed that the Administration attached great importance to the development of environmental industries. She nevertheless pointed out that as those engaged in waste collection and sorting were mainly self-employed persons, any large-scale development in waste sorting operation might affect their livelihood. As regards the wet-and-dry waste sorting pilot scheme, SETW said that its main objective was to test out the viability and cost-effectiveness of this alternative form of waste recovery. Since it was a pilot scheme, only a limited number of jobs had been created. However, the interim results of the scheme revealed that the turnover rate of workers engaged in sorting work was very high as few were willing to take up the

Action

work given its obnoxious nature. Since the success of the pilot scheme would hinge on the participating households, the present participation rate of 20% would have to be increased. To this end, publicity work for the scheme would be stepped up to encourage greater participation. The Administration would also liaise with building management companies and waste collection companies on the logistics of waste collection with a view to minimizing the extra cost incurred from wet-and-dry waste sorting. The viability and cost-effectiveness of wet-and-dry waste sorting would be reviewed upon the completion of the pilot scheme in March 2004.

5. Mr LAU Kong-wah queried whether the pilot scheme should be promoted given the not too encouraging results. SETW advised that while the pilot scheme was not able to generate as much job opportunities for unskilled workers as expected, it was successful in proving that properly sorted recyclables had commercial value as the separated dry waste was sold to recyclers through open tender. The Administration would continue to promote waste recovery and facilitate the development of recycling industry in Hong Kong. Cooperation was being sought from the Trade and Industry Department (TID) for the inclusion of environmental industries in industrial estates. On TID's concern about environmental nuisance arising from large-scale waste recycling operation within industrial estates, the Administration had assured TID that environmental problems associated with sorting of dry waste would be minimal. Meanwhile, the Lands Department had also been requested to identify sites which were conveniently located near a pier for short-term leasing to environmental industries to facilitate marine transport of recyclables.

6. Mr Henry WU enquired whether incineration would be an option for waste management. SETW said that large-scale waste treatment facilities would be required in the long run to reduce the volume of unrecyclable waste that had to be disposed of and as such, incineration technology would be one of the options to be considered. It was worth noting that with the latest advancement in technology, environmental problems associated with incineration, including the generation of dioxin, had been resolved through proper control. The incinerators in Japan and Europe were able to meet the most stringent air quality objectives.

7. While not objecting to incineration, the Chairman expressed reservations at the use of incineration when an overall waste management strategy had yet to be worked out. She stressed that incineration should be used as a last resort when all available options, including waste recycling and recovery, had been exhausted. Referring to the experience in Taiwan where measures to reduce and recycle waste had been so effective that the incinerators had not been put to their full use, the Chairman opined that there might not be a need to implement incineration on a large scale in Hong Kong if effective measures to recycle and reuse waste were in place. She further pointed out that the types of incinerators to be used would be dependent on the composition of waste which might be affected by wet-and-dry waste sorting. SETW clarified that incineration was only one of the possible options. Although the quantity of municipal solid waste requiring disposal in Hong Kong was about 9 000 tonnes per day, the Administration would consider technologies that were able to treat 500 tonnes of waste per day. This would allow for greater flexibility on the one

Action

hand and address the concern about installation of over-sized incinerators on the other.

Sewage

8. In response to Mr Henry WU's enquiry about the progress of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS), SETW said that the Administration would be consulting the public on the four options on the remaining stages of HATS as recommended by the International Review Panel. Mr WONG Yung-kan asked whether the 12 hectares of additional land required for the construction of the compact sewage treatment works would be met by reclamation. SETW confirmed that land was readily available at the Stonecutters Island and reclamation was not necessary. She further explained that the need to specify land requirement in the paper was to make it clear to the public that additional land would still be required even if a compact sewage treatment technology like the Biological Aerated Filter was to be adopted.

Noise

9. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that the traffic noise problem was seriously affecting the quality of life in Hong Kong. Despite the many consultancy studies conducted over the past years on abatement of traffic noise, no positive actions had been taken to tackle the problem. Noting that the present Policy Address had not included any schedule for implementing noise abatement measures, he enquired if this was due to the rising deficit and if not, whether assurance could be given on the implementation schedule.

10. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment and Transport) E2 (DSETW(ET) E2) explained that there had been no change in policy on traffic noise. For projects involving construction of new roads or redevelopment of existing roads that were designated projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499), Environmental Impact Assessments would be carried out to assess the noise impact. On the other hand, where technically feasible, low noise surfacing materials would be used on roads to reduce noise impact. The road surfacing programme conducted by the Highways Department was expected to be completed in one and a half years' time. Noise barriers would also be retrofitted within available resources but outcome of consultation revealed that there was objection against the provision of noise barriers in some cases as in the case of the Fanling Highway. The Highways Department would take into account the cost effectiveness of noise barriers and other noise abatement measures before deciding which option should be pursued. It would also look into the feasibility of other interim measures such as traffic management measures to reduce traffic noise. He assured members that the Administration would endeavour to reduce traffic noise within its available resources.

Action

Air

11. Ms Miriam LAU expressed concern about the lukewarm response to the incentive scheme to encourage the early replacement of diesel light buses with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or electric ones. Unlike the LPG Taxi Scheme which was implemented with a huge success, there were only 600 to 700 diesel public light buses which had been switched to LPG ones since the launching of the incentive scheme in August 2002. The poor response might be attributable to the fact that many public light buses were operating on fixed routes which posed difficulty in refilling. There were also concerns about the technical feasibility of LPG light buses. In the face of the slow progress in the conversion of diesel public light buses which comprised a significant percentage of the public fleet, there might be difficulties in meeting the pledge made in 1999 Policy Address to reduce emissions from motor vehicles in Hong Kong to an anticipated level.

12. DSETW(ET)E2 said that the incentive scheme formed only part of the comprehensive programme announced in the 1999 Policy Address to reduce emissions from motor vehicles in Hong Kong. Apart from the incentive scheme, there were other measures such as the LPG Taxi Scheme, retrofitting pre-Euro diesel vehicles with emission reduction devices, adoption of Euro III emission standard for newly registered vehicles and raising the fixed penalty for smoky vehicles. It was expected that the programme would reduce the particulate and nitrogen oxide emissions from motor vehicles by 80% and 30% respectively by end-2005. The measures implemented so far had already reduced the particulate and nitrogen oxide emissions from motor vehicles by 63% and 28% respectively. The Administration was confident that the targets would be achieved by the end of 2005. He added that a direct comparison between the incentive scheme and the LPG Taxi Scheme was not appropriate as the former was implemented on a voluntary basis while the latter on a mandatory basis. While the actual number of diesel public light buses which had switched to LPG ones was only about 700, there was still a long time before the expiry of the incentive scheme. Under the prevailing economic situation, owners of public light buses might tend to maximize the service life of their vehicles before switching to new ones. Up till now, about 80% of the newly registered public light buses were LPG ones. Given the price difference between diesel which amounted to about \$7.60 per litre and LPG which ranged from \$2 to \$2.30 per litre, the Administration was optimistic that more owners would switch to LPG models before the expiry of the incentive scheme. On the suggestion of providing incentives to encourage the switch to Euro III diesel light bus models, DSETW(ET)E2 explained that the target reduction of particulate emission could not be achieved through the switch to Euro III diesel models as their levels of particulate emission were still high compared to LPG models which had almost zero particulate emission. Besides, as it was a policy decision to disallow the import of the more polluting Euro II diesel models in Hong Kong, the newer and more environmental friendly models of Euro III would be the only available diesel models for owners to choose from. As such, the Administration saw no reason why incentives should be provided to encourage the switch.

Action

13. Noting that Euro III diesel models had been advocated for use as public buses, Ms Miriam LAU expressed disappointment at the Administration's refusal to provide incentives to encourage the switch, adding that some owners of public light buses of fixed routes could not switch to LPG given the unavailability of LPG filling stations along their routes. The Chairman was also concerned that Government would impose duty on LPG upon completion of the conversion programme. SETW said that one of the reasons why some owners of public light buses had not switched to LPG models despite the incentive scheme was that they could not afford to do so. However, the price differentials between diesel and LPG might help encourage the switch. The Administration would also continue to look into the feasibility of providing more LPG filling stations to facilitate users.

14. Mr Henry WU asked if consideration would be given to promoting the use of the more environmental friendly but more expensive hybrid cars. SETW said that given the great demand for hybrid cars in Hong Kong where buyers had to wait at least four to six months for their orders, no incentives were necessary to encourage the switch. The reason why people were willing to pay more for hybrid cars was because they consumed less fuel and were more environmental friendly. Dr LAW Chi-kwong noted that according to a recent survey, savings from fuel were not able to offset the high sale prices of hybrid cars. Therefore, in attempt to promote the use of more environmental friendly vehicles, consideration should be given to providing incentives, such as lower first registration tax, to encourage the switch. SETW reiterated that as the demand for hybrid cars had far exceeded the supply, there might not be a need for incentives to encourage the switch. Nevertheless, the Administration would keep in view the latest international development in hybrid cars.

Energy

15. Dr LAW Chi-kwong enquired about the means to encourage wider application of renewable energy in Hong Kong. SETW said that agreement had been made with the two power companies to undertake a pilot production-scale wind turbine at a voltage of 600 kilowatts each for public demonstration and evaluation purposes, as part of the outcome of the interim review of their Scheme of Control Agreements.

Nature conservation

16. Mr WONG Yung-kan said that the recent incidents involving environmental damages to Tung Chung River, unauthorized fishing and stealing of precious plants had called for a more comprehensive nature conservation policy. He was particularly concerned about the lack of proper enforcement actions against unauthorised fishing in marine parks. SETW said that the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau was working closely with the Home Affairs Department and the Lands Department on the reinstatement of the affected section of the Tung Chung River. As for unauthorised fishing, enforcement actions were being taken by the Marine Police and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department while talks were held with the Mainland authorities on measures to combat such offences.

Action

Public participation

17. Mr Henry WU opined that publicity should be stepped up to encourage public participation in environmental protection. Referring to the success of the Eco-Business Award which had encouraged much participation from the corporations and organizations as well as the Waste Recycling Campaign which had boosted participation from those residing in public and private housing estates, he held the view that more environmental initiatives for recycling and recovery should be introduced. This was also in line with overseas practices. SETW agreed to the need for public education and public participation. While there was increased public awareness on environmental protection, the Administration would continue its publicity efforts through the Environmental Campaign Committee and seek cooperation from commercial enterprises to bring about sustainability of development. As for environmental initiatives, SETW said that apart from incentives for waste reduction and recycling, studies were being conducted on product responsibility and its impact on consumers and the industries.

**II. Any other business**

18. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:00 am.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
18 February 2004