

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1213/03-04  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA/1

**Panel on Environmental Affairs**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Monday, 23 February 2004, at 3:30 pm  
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon CHOY So-yuk (Chairman)  
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)  
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP  
Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP  
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP  
Hon LAU Ping-cheung  
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

**Members absent** : Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP  
Hon WONG Yung-kan  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok, JP

**Public officers  
attending** : **For item IV**

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Ms Doris CHEUNG  
Deputy Secretary (Environment and Transport)E1

Ms Joyce HO  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Environment and  
Transport)E2 (Acting)

Environmental Protection Department

Dr Ellen CHAN  
Assistant Director (Waste Facilities)

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

**Staff in attendance :** Mrs Mary TANG  
Senior Council Secretary (1)2

Miss Mandy POON  
Legislative Assistant 4

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1. At the appointed time, the Chairman called the meeting to order. As the joint meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs and the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works to discuss the Impact of construction works on rivers in Hong Kong held immediately before the Panel meeting had not been able to complete its deliberation, the Chairman proposed and members agreed to adjourn the meeting for about half an hour to allow more time for the joint meeting to continue discussion in Conference Room A. The Panel meeting was subsequently resumed at 3:55 pm.

**I. Confirmation of minutes**

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1028/03-04 — Minutes of the special meeting held on 14 January 2004

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1029/03-04 — Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2004)

2. The minutes of the meetings held on 14 and 29 January 2004 were confirmed.

**II. Information paper issued since last meeting**

3. Members noted the following information paper which had been issued since the last meeting -

LC Paper No. CB(1) 973/03-04(01) — Letter from the Kwai Tsing District Council expressing concern about the Administration's decision to incinerate dioxin-contaminated residue at the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre in Tsing Yi and requesting for a review of the decision

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**III. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1031/03-04(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1031/03-04(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

4. Members agreed to discuss the staffing proposal of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau at the next meeting scheduled for Monday, 22 March 2004 at 2:30 pm.

5. At the request of Ms Miriam LAU, the Chairman instructed the Clerk to follow up with the Administration on the provision of further information on the subject “Setting up of free collection points for oil refuse from vessels” since the last report on the subject was made in May 2003.

**IV. Measures to promote the prevention and recovery of municipal solid waste in Hong Kong**

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1031/03-04(03) — Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1097/03-04(01) — Submission from the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong)

6. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment and Transport)E1 (DSETW(ET)E1) reported that from 2000 to 2003, the quantity of municipal solid waste (MSW) was maintained at 3.4 million tonnes each year. The overall MSW recovery rate in 2003 was 41% as against the target of 40%. This was mainly due to an unusual surge in metal recovery as a result of strong demand for waste metals in the Mainland. She also briefed members on the updated progress of various measures which the Government had taken to promote the prevention and recovery of MSW. Referring to the submission from the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong tabled at the meeting, DSETW(ET)E1 said that the Administration would carefully examine the proposals therein.

7. The Chairman noted that, in an attempt to reduce the use of construction materials and extend the service life of landfills, the Mainland had recently introduced a requirement on the mandatory use of paints instead of tiles on outer walls of buildings of more than three storeys. Although such a requirement might not be applicable to private buildings in Hong Kong, consideration could be given to using paints on outer walls of Government facilities with a view to reducing construction waste in the long run. While agreeing to gather information on the new building practice of the Mainland, DSETW(ET)E1 said that the Government Logistics Department had been regularly updating product specifications and tender assessment criteria by taking into account environmental considerations where practicable. On the Chairman’s proposal of applying the polluter-pays principle in the management of MSW, DSETW(ET)E1 said that the Government had already introduced a bill into LegCo proposing charging for the disposal of construction waste and would as the

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next step examine introduction of charging for the disposal of MSW. However, any such proposals would need to be carefully assessed and the public would be duly consulted.

8. The Chairman expressed disappointment at the slow progress in the review of waste management policy, given that her last motion debate on the subject was carried in 1999. DSETW(ET)E1 said that the Administration had been consulting the trades and the stakeholders on various initiatives to manage waste. Taking product responsibility schemes (PRS) as an example, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had commenced a regulatory impact assessment study in October 2003 to assess the costs and benefits of different options to facilitate recycling of waste tyres as well as their impacts on stakeholders. Possible options included the introduction of a levy on new tyres, a disposal charge on waste tyres and a levy on the vehicle licence fee. In introducing PRS, care has to be exercised to ensure that PRS would not impose undue impact on the business sector and consumers. The Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Facilities) (ADEP(WF)) added that the study was expected to complete in mid-2004 after which EPD would consult the industry and stakeholders on the recommended option.

9. Given the low recovery rate of plastic bottles, the Chairman held the view that government assistance might be needed to enhance the viability of recycling of plastic bottles. DSETW(ET)E1 agreed that as plastic bottles were bulky and light, their transportation cost was high and some housing estates had experienced difficulties in securing recyclers to collect their recovered plastic bottles. To address this problem, EPD had since April 2001 hired contractors to collect plastic bottles from public/private housing estates to prevent them from being dumped in landfills. On the other hand, the Environment Conservation Fund (ECF) had provided funding for the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) to develop compactors so as to reduce the bulkiness of plastic bottles and lower their average transportation cost. Field trials had been carried out to test the compactors and HKPC was now reviewing the technical aspect and cost-effectiveness of utilizing such compactors in collection of plastic bottles. On the Chairman's suggestion of providing direct subsidy for recycling of plastic bottles, she said that the Administration would need to be very cautious about the implications of providing financial assistance to specific types of waste recyclers. At the Chairman's request, the Administration undertook to provide the unit cost of materials recovered under the community waste recovery projects sponsored by ECF.

10. Noting that the Government had to invest heavily in the provision of purpose-built waste separation bins and transportation of collected recyclable materials, the Chairman opined that it would be more cost effective to allow scavengers to have free access to the recyclable materials in the separation bins. This would serve the dual purpose of saving public expenditure on the one hand and generating income for the waste recyclers on the other. While acknowledging the Chairman's suggestion, DSETW(ET)E1 pointed out that it would not be feasible to rely totally on scavengers to collect all recyclable materials from the 27 000 separation bins located at some 9 000 points across the territory. Besides, scavengers were likely to collect

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recyclable materials from waste separation bins located in urban areas but not those in more remote places. She added that, the contractors employed by the Government were required to maintain the cleanliness of the separation bins in addition to collecting recyclable materials. If scavengers were allowed to rummage the separation bins to get what they wanted, this would likely create environmental hygiene and cleanliness problems.

11. The Chairman considered that the Administration should take the lead in organizing large-scale campaigns for the donation of cleaned used clothing, footwear and indeed anything which could be of use to the Mainland and developing countries. This would not only achieve waste reduction but also help the underprivileged. ADEP(WF) explained that more than 90% of the recyclable materials such as paper, metals and plastics collected in Hong Kong were exported mainly to the Mainland and some to other countries for recycling. Apart from two paper recycling plants, there were not many operations in the manufacture of recycled products from waste materials in Hong Kong. She further explained that under the Basel Convention, the import and export of contaminated or hazardous waste would be controlled.

**V. Any other business**

12. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:25 pm.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
5 March 2004