

ETWB(E) 55/03/104 pt.3

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26 June 2004

Miss Becky Yu
Clerk to LegCo Environmental Affairs Panel
Legislative Council Secretariat
3/F, Citibank Tower
Hong Kong
(fax: 28696794)

Dear Miss Yu,

**Panel on Environmental Affairs
Waste Oil From Vessels**

I refer to the meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 26 April 2004 at which Members requested for the following :-

- (a) statistics on oil consumption as against waste oil generation and a breakdown on the quantities of waste oil which were recycled at licensed private chemical waste disposal facilities as well as those which were treated and disposed of at Chemical Waste Treatment Centre (CWTC), including the residual waste oil resulting from the recycling process which was subsequently transported to CWTC for treatment and disposal; and
- (b) more information about the alleged contamination problem associated with the operation of the Star Ferry.

2. According to the statistics, the difference between quantities of lubricating oil imported to and exported from Hong Kong is about 70,000 tonnes per year. Information obtained from oil importers suggests that about 40,000 to 50,000 tonnes of lubricating oil are sold to ocean-going vessels. This indicates that 20,000 to 30,000 tonnes of lubricating oil are consumed in Hong Kong. According to our record, about 12,000 tonnes of waste lubricating oil are collected each year. The difference in the oil consumption and waste oil collection figures is attributable to many factors such as :-

- Some of the lubricating oil consumed in Hong Kong is used by fishing vessels and trucks, the owners of which may dispose of their waste oil in places outside Hong Kong such as the Mainland, during maintenance;
- Part of the lubricating oil could be destroyed through processes such as co-burning with fuel in certain types of engines and deconstruction in engines, particularly old engines;
- Used lubricating oil, instead of being disposed of as waste oil, may be re-used directly as a low-grade lubricant for machinery.

3. There is no indication that waste oil was imported to Hong Kong for treatment at our waste treatment facilities. Neither is there evidence showing that there is a serious problem of illegal disposal of waste oil.

4. Of the 12,000 tonnes of waste lubricating oil collected each year, more than 11,000 tonnes are recycled at licensed private chemical waste disposal facilities. Only less than 800 tonnes of waste lubricating oil are sent directly to the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre (CWTC) by waste producers. The residual resulting from the recycling process is also delivered to the CWTC for final disposal. About 5,900 tonnes of such residue waste oil are treated at CWTC each year.

5. As regards the alleged contamination problem associated with the sediment at the Star Ferry Pier, there is no information which suggests that the sediment in Central has been contaminated by waste oil generated by the operation of the Star Ferry. Inspection by our local control staff also indicated that Star Ferry's operation does not violate the Waste Disposal Ordinance.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Teresa Wong)

for Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works