



CB(1) 114/04-05(01)
 21 Oct 2004
 Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association
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Environmental Protection Officer Branch

環境保護主任分會

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By fax only

Fax no. 3110 2700

Dr. Sarah LIAO, JP

Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Dear Sarah,

Re: Staff views on the Merger

I write, on behalf of the Environmental Protection Officer Branch of Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, to express the views of the environmental protection officer grade staff on the recent proposal on the merger of Environmental Branch of ETWB and EPD.

New Organisational Structure

We see that the new organisational structure is fundamentally the result of internal review conducted by the department in the last year or so. The new structure, in particular the left wing, including the divisions under DDEP(1) is formed after having consulted the views of the staff consultation at its various stages of development. We may say, it is a collection of wisdom among the staff, the management and the consultant. We welcome this new structure.

Staff Implications

(i) Creation of D6 post as PSE/DEP

While we acknowledge the need to have a more efficient and harmonised decision making and policy formulation process through merging the EB and EPD, I hope the management would also take into account the views of the

professional staff in this unprecedented organisational change. We welcome the upgrading of the DEP post to a D6 post with a combined role as PSE. By work nature for this new post, it is evident that the officer, whatever the grade is, appointed to this post should possess various competencies, including managerial, political and professional, at tip-top level. Under your professional auspices and support from experienced staff in EPD with environmental expertise, we are confident that an AO grade officer will be able to lead the department to face the new environmental challenges ahead.

Environmental issues have always been on the political agenda starting from the very first day when this department was formed. I hope you would share our view that our senior professional staff with years of accumulated political experience and skill would also be sufficiently qualified for appointment to this D6 post. We acknowledge the fact that with the retirement of DDEP and DEP almost at the same time, there may be a gap in the succession to the new head of the department. But given time, say in couple of years, we strongly believe that our senior professional staff should be ready in all aspects to take up the post of PSE/DEP. We hope this is not just our belief but also yours so that we can work hand-in-hand again in a professional manner for the betterment of our environment, not just within HKSAR but the region.

(ii) Policy DDEPs and ADEPs

For historical reasons, environmental policy formulation starts from the department and move its way up to the Bureau level for endorsement. We understand that after merging, the two new DDEPs in charge of the policy divisions and one ADEP on environmental policy will be filled by the existing DSs and PAS from the EB. This staffing arrangement is quite obvious and certainly a most smooth transitional arrangement. We are told that the senior directorate posts would be filled in future by open directorate system, i.e. it will equally be available to EPO grade colleagues.

We hope when the new department starts to mature and our senior professional staff with proven abilities, would be given the opportunity and priority to fill the senior policy directorate posts. If no professional staff is actually given the opportunity to fill the policy DDEP posts in the near future, there is no way they can gain sufficient experience and to demonstrate his/her abilities in policy issues. Fairness would not been down the road in the competition for the

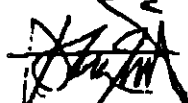
PSE/DEP post under the open directorate system, given the fact the AO grade staff has ample opportunity to acquire relevant experience in other departments and policy bureaux.

(iii) Staff Morale

It is very disappointing to see that EPD has to lose 2 D1 posts and will soon lose the D5 post. The 3 directorate posts constituted a significant portion of the directorate posts in EPD available for advancement. Many of our professional staff see promotion as being too luxurious to hope for. This is not because they do not possess the calibre and competencies for the promotion rank. It is rather the cut back in promotion posts which deprived them of the opportunity. This worst hits the morale of the staff who have been so devoted to their profession. We hope with merger, we can create a win-win situation by opening up more senior posts to professional staff in the department.

Before closing, please excuse me for taking the liberty to write you this letter to express our views. We hope you would consider the views of the staff in this merging exercise and take every opportunity to reflect our views to relevant decision making parties.

Yours faithfully,



(Alan H.L. YIM)

Chairman

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