

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 3082/05-06

Ref : CB2/T/16

Paper for the House Committee meeting on 6 October 2006

Quota of Active Bills Committees

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' approval to increase the maximum number of active Bills Committees from 15 to 16 and to amend rule 21(a) of the House Rules.

Background

2. Rule 21(a) provides that "*The maximum number of Bills Committees and subcommittees on subsidiary legislation should be limited to 16 at any one time. A slot under the quota is specifically designated for a subcommittee studying subsidiary legislation. While the maximum number of active Bills Committees is 15, there may be more than one subcommittee in action, if warranted. When more than 15 Bills Committees are formed, a queuing system will automatically be activated.*"

3. In the 2005 Resource Allocation Exercise, a bid for two additional teams of committee staff in Council Business Divisions 1 and 2 of the Secretariat was approved to cope with the increasingly substantial and complex work in servicing committees and to speed up the processing time of legislative proposals. The two teams, each comprising one Chief Council Secretary, one Senior Council Secretary, one Council Secretary, and one Legislative Assistant, have been formed since April 2006.

Increase in quota of active bills committees

4. With the creation of two additional teams, it is proposed that the number of Bills Committees which can be serviced by the Secretariat at any one time be increased from 15 to 16. When the number of Bills Committees formed exceeds 16, the queuing system will be activated automatically. Bills Committees formed after the quota has been filled will be put on the waiting

list. The order of Bills Committees on the waiting list is in the order of the introduction of the relevant bills into the Council, as provided in rule 21(f).

Amendment to House Rules

5. Rule 21 concerns Bills Committees, but rule 21(a), as it is presently drafted, refers to a quota of 16 for Bills Committees and a slot under the quota for subcommittee(s) set up to study subsidiary legislation. While the maximum number of active Bills Committees is 15, there is no limit on the number of subcommittees so formed, as work on most items of subsidiary legislation is required to be completed within a statutory time limit. In order to make it clear that the quota system actually applies to Bills Committees only, it is proposed to take this opportunity to delete the reference in rule 21(a) to subcommittees formed to study subsidiary legislation. Members may wish to note that rule 20(j) already provides that *“The House Committee may appoint subcommittees to assist in the consideration of specific subsidiary legislation and issues of public concern which fall outside the purview of Panels”*.

6. Subject to Members’ consent to increase the quota of active Bills Committees and to the proposal in paragraph 5 above, the proposed amendment to rule 21(a) is set out in the **Appendix** for Members’ consideration.

Advice sought

7. Members are invited to approve the increase in the quota of active Bills Committees from 15 to 16 and the amendment to rule 21(a) in the Appendix.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
4 October 2006

Proposed amendment to rule 21(a) of the House Rules

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21. Bills Committees

- (a) The maximum number of Bills Committees ~~and subcommittees on subsidiary legislation~~ should be limited to 16 at any one time. ~~A slot under the quota is specifically designated for a subcommittee studying subsidiary legislation. While the maximum number of active Bills Committees is 15, there may be more than one subcommittee in action, if warranted.~~ When more than ~~15~~ 16 Bills Committees are formed, a queuing system will automatically be activated.

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