



CB(1) 764/05-06(01)

Ref no: 032-06-MSW-LEGCO

January 20, 2006

Legislative Council Secretariat
3/F Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Central
Hong Kong.

Fax and Mail
2869 6794

Attn: Mrs. Mary Tang
Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs

Dear *Mrs. Tang*

Panel on Environmental Affairs
Special Meeting on 19 January 2006
Written Submission

Further to our discussion with you, Green Council, being one of the leading NGOs focusing on environmental education and operating the Hong Kong Green Label Scheme, is very pleased to submit our views on the Government's Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014) as follows:

General Comments

- (a) We concur with the Government's view of adopting the three-tiered hierarchy for the management of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), namely:
- Waste avoidance and minimization
 - Reuse, recovery and recycling; and
 - Bulk reduction and disposal of unavoidable waste
- (b) We support in principle the three strategic objectives proposed in the Policy Framework as follows:
- Avoiding waste generation at source; facilitating the recovery and reuse of material and the recycling of non-reusable material;
 - Applying the "polluter-pay principle" to induce economic incentive to reduce waste for disposal; and
 - Adopting advanced technologies and practices to treat waste requiring final disposal and to create new economic opportunities.

- 2 -

- (c) We agree with the Government that environmental education and capacity building is essential in enhancing the community momentum to meet the waste management challenges. To effectively enlist the support and participation of the community in reducing waste, strengthened reaching-out programmes should be launched in a structured and focused manner. Partnership with different sectors of the community and NGOs could greatly enhance the cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

Specific Comments

- (a) While recognizing that harnessing the participation of members of public on waste reduction and recovery is a great challenge, reducing MSW generated by 1% per annum up to year 2014 seems not sufficient in view of the urgency to handle the great amount of waste produced with diminishing landfill space. The Government may reconsider setting a more ambitious target say 3% to 5% at least for the next few years by deploying resources from other less competing priorities.
- (b) Further use of the "polluter-pays" principle is greatly appreciated. However, well thought out programmes such as MSW charging scheme and Product Responsibility Schemes (PRSs) should be considered. The key to success of such schemes greatly relies on the launching of structured public education programmes in partnership with different sectors of the community.
- (c) Imposing PRSs can partially promote "circular economy". Encouraging the demand for the recycled products, or environmentally preferable products is a critical part for completing the "circular economy". As a major consumer in Hong Kong, the Government should have clear policy, commitment and appropriate education to its officers on the use of environmentally preferable products. The demand for environmentally preferable products from Government post great incentive for suppliers and manufactures in providing suitable products. Hence, the availability and circulation of environmentally preferable products for the public can be enhanced.
- (d) Public education is necessary to the success of policy tools. Apart from educating youngsters, partnerships with business community are also very important. To encourage more members of the business community to participate voluntary schemes such as WastewiSe Scheme and other initiatives, the Government should provide more incentives to attract better participation from the business community.
- (e) Continual provision of land for waste recycling trade through short term tenancy is well supported. However, basic infrastructure and facilities such as utilities and well formed sites should be provided so as to reduce the setting up cost of the trade. Moreover, a proper mechanism should be put in place to enable those small recycling businesses are benefited from this initiative.
- (f) On the development of Integrated Waste Management Facilities (IWMF), advance technology for the recycling, separation and disposal of MSW should be encouraged. Nevertheless, adequate public consultation before adopting these technology is critical

.../3

- 3 -

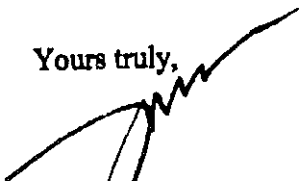
to its acceptance. In addition a system should put in place for public to monitor impact to environmental attributes from these facilities, to enable transparency.

- (g) The idea of EcoPark is strongly supported as long as suitable tendering mechanism is built in to attract value-added recycling industries to set up their production lines. This could help treating locally produced waste while creating more job opportunities. It would be of great help to the environmental industry if the commissioning of Phase II could be advanced.
- (h) We support the adoption of green procurement policy for all Government departments so as to enable selection and consumption of products and services in a sustainable manner without unnecessary sacrifice on quality of life or environment. To this end, we propose to set up a Hong Kong Green Purchasing Network (HKGPN) in order to facilitate sustainable consumption and assist industrial and manufacturing sectors on eco-innovation and product technological advancement. The HKGPN will be an information dissemination and exchange platform with both basic and technical assistance. The platform will not limit to business-to-business interaction and but also facilitate a more general level. Through its operation, local business community, industrial companies, and their counterparts in Mainland, will benefit from elevated eco-innovation, environmental performance and sustainability. HKGPN will also help incubating the development of local environmentally responsible industries and services. Similar networks have been established, implemented and endorsed around the world, and proven to be effective and financially viable. The Government may consider establishing the HKGPN by using the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Approach. A visionary green procurement policy of the Government could be vital in helping to address the specific waste management and avoidance issue, and sending a positive and strong message both domestically and internationally regarding Hong Kong's progressive position on sustainable development and sound environmental management.

For your information, Green Council is the only Hong Kong-based non-profit and charitable organization established in 2000 with the motto of "Conservation begins with Education". It has a mission of promoting awareness of environmental protection amongst local industries and the general public through assistance programmes and education. It has had extensive experience and success in the field of environmentally preferable products/services identification, certification and promotion.

We hope the above suggestions are useful for the Panel's discussion follow-ups on the management of MSW in Hong Kong. In particular, I would be most grateful if you could kindly include Green Council into your list of consultation parties for future government policy on environmental issues.

Yours truly,



Linda W. P. Ho
Chief Executive Officer