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## **Advisory Council on the Environment**

### **A Position Paper on the “Proposal on an Environmental Levy on Plastic Shopping Bags”**

The Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) supports the Administration’s proposal on an environmental levy on plastic shopping bags, which aims to reduce the indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags through a direct economic disincentive.

2. The ACE discussed the Administration’s proposal at its meeting on 11 June and after extensive deliberation, agreed that –

- (a) the Council supported the Administration's proposed scheme, which would go a long way not only in terms of reducing waste, but also in terms of educating the public on their “eco-responsibility”. The proposed environmental levy represented another major step forward in putting the “polluter-pays” principle into practice;
- (b) the scheme should be implemented as soon as possible with a view to reducing the indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags through a direct economic disincentive;
- (c) the Council accepted that the scheme, being the first phase in the introduction of Product Responsibility Schemes in Hong Kong, should be simple and easy to administer such that it could get off the ground smoothly;
- (d) the Council encouraged the Administration to review the scheme in a year's time. Consideration then should be given to extending the scheme to other retail outlets so as to realize more environmental benefits and foster a level-playing field in the affected business sector;

- (e) the Administration should continue with the voluntary effort on plastic shopping bag reduction, especially at retailers not yet covered by the scheme; and
- (f) the Council urged the Administration and Legislative Council to work together to bring in this statutory Producer Responsibility Scheme as soon as practicable.