Subcommittee on Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) (Amendment of Schedules) Order 2009

Information requested at the Second Meeting on 1 December 2009

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides Members with supplementary information requested at the meeting held on 1 December 2009.

PRODUCT COVERAGE OF WASHING MACHINES AND DEHUMIDIFIERS

Washing Machines

2. The Administration is requested-

> "to advise the rationales for setting the thresholds for washing machines at a rated washing capacity not exceeding 7 kilograms (kg), and dehumidifiers at a rated dehumidifying capacity not exceeding 87 litres (L) per day and to also advise whether consideration would be given to adjusting these thresholds after taking into account members' and deputations' views."

3. We propose to cover washing machines with a rated washing capacity not exceeding 7kg under the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme (MEELS). According to a trade survey commissioned by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) in 2008 (the Trade Survey), sales volume of washing machines with a rated washing capacity exceeding 7kg accounted for around 1% (about 2 300 units) of total annual sales quantity of washing machines in Hong Kong. The compliance cost for such washing machines under MEELS (if included) will be relatively higher given its limited sales

volume.

4. After the last meeting of this Subcommittee, EMSD has conducted a questionnaire survey inviting all members of the Trade Task Force to express views on the proposed change in scope of washing machines covered under the second phase of MEELS to those with a rated washing capacity exceeding 7kg. The majority of them expressed reservations on such expansion. Some of them indicated that the annual sales volume of washing machines with capacity exceeding 7kg is only around 1% and stated that the relatively higher compliance cost might drive some of such products out of the market and in turn reduce consumers' choice.

5. Given the above, and that the potential energy saving of the proposed expansion of scope would be very limited, we consider that the original scope of washing machines under the MEELS should be kept.

Dehumidifiers

6. We proposed to cover dehumidifiers with a rated dehumidifying capacity not exceeding 87L per day after making reference to relevant international practices. US and Canada also adopted similar practice.

7. In the last meeting of the Subcommittee, deputations advised that dehumidifiers of rated dehumidifying capacity between 35L and 87L were rather uncommon for domestic application and their sale volume was very limited. The compliance cost for such dehumidifiers under MEELS (if included) will be relatively higher given its limited sales volume.

8. EMSD has consulted members of the Trade Task Force in the questionnaire survey on narrowing down the coverage of dehumidifiers to those with a rated dehumidifying capacity not exceeding 35L. Most members indicated support for the suggestion and expressed that the annual sales volume of dehumidifiers with capacity exceeding 35L is very small. Taking into consideration of the low sales volume and

support from the trade, we consider the suggestion feasible. Subject to members' views, we will seek to amend the Order to effect this suggestion.

FLUORESCENT TUBES AND FLUORESCENT LAMPS

9. The Administration is requested-

> "to consider providing a label for collection points of spent compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) to enhance public awareness. To also advise how the Administration could ensure that spent CFLs so collected would be transferred to the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre (CWTC) for proper treatment before disposal, and that CWTC would have sufficient capacity to treat the anticipated increase in spent CFLs following the implementation of the MEELS."

10. All collection points of fluorescent tubes and CFLs in the residential sector are provided with sticker labels, posters and collection boxes with logo of the scheme to enhance public awareness. Licensed chemical waste collectors are engaged to collect the spent fluorescent tubes and CFLs from the collection points as well as from the commercial and industrial sectors on a regular basis and the recovered products are delivered to the CWTC for proper treatment.

11. At present, the annual capacity of the CWTC's mercury waste treatment facility is about 1 million used fluorescent tubes and/or CFLs. We have launched a plan to upgrade the capacity of the CWTC's mercury waste treatment facility. Upon completion, the treatment capacity will reach about 3 million used fluorescent tubes and/or CFLs per year. The upgrading work is expected to be completed in 2010.

IMPACT OF MERCURY ON THE ENVIRONMENT

12. The Administration is requested-

"to conduct tests for toxic mercury across the territory to avoid inadvertent release of such chemical into the environment due to improper disposal of spent CFLs."

13. The bases and sides of strategic landfills in the territory are sealed with impermeable liners to prevent the contamination of groundwater by waste and leachate. The impermeable liners are made of high-density polyethylene, an inert material which can withstand the erosive chemicals or metallic substances in leachate. Through an effective collection system of the impermeable liners, leachate generated in waste degradation is first carried to leachate treatment facilities in the landfill for treatment and then to a public sewage treatment plant for further treatment and final discharge.

Environment Bureau
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