

香港特別行政區政府
政務司司長辦公室轄下行政署



The Government of
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28 February 2012

The Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Chairman
House Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miriam,

Proposed Order of Priority in the Scrutiny of Bills

We understand that currently one bills committee is awaiting bills committee slot. At the same time, the House Committee meeting on 2 March 2012 will consider, inter alia, whether Bills Committees should be set up for the three bills to be introduced into LegCo on 29 February. I am writing to propose the order of priority in the scrutiny of bills should the number of bills for which Members decide to set up Bills Committees exceeds the number of vacant Bills Committee slots available.

Having considered the objectives of the bills in the pipeline, their complexity and relative urgency, we propose that the following two bills (in this order) should be given priority –

- (a) United Nations (Anti-Terrorism Measures) (Amendment) Bill 2012;
and
- (b) Trade Descriptions (Unfair Trade Practices)(Amendment) Bill 2012

Brief descriptions of the two bills are set out below.


United Nations (Anti-Terrorism Measures) (Amendment) Bill 2012

This Bill was introduced on 22 February 2012. It seeks to implement two outstanding recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (“FATF”) as set out in its 2008 Mutual Evaluation Report on Hong Kong (“the Report”). On the basis of the Report, FATF resolved that Hong Kong should be put on a follow-up process and be required to report to FATF on a regular basis on improvement actions taken or planned. According to FATF’s procedures, Hong Kong is expected to have addressed the major deficiencies above-mentioned and seek FATF’s agreement to remove Hong Kong from the follow-up process not later than four years after the Report, i.e. by June 2012. If Hong Kong fails to seek removal from the follow-up process within a reasonable period due to absence of substantial improvements, FATF may apply enhanced scrutiny and monitoring on Hong Kong. Taking into account Hong Kong’s status as an international financial centre and the fact that Hong Kong’s major trading partners have complied with the two FATF’s major recommendations concerned, any enhanced scrutiny by FATF on Hong Kong would seriously affect the competitiveness of Hong Kong vis-a-vis our competitors and the continued economic development of Hong Kong for the benefit of our community. This Bill is currently awaiting Bills Committee slot. In view of the urgency of the Bill, we suggest that the first priority be given to this Bill.

Trade Descriptions (Unfair Trade Practices)(Amendment) Bill 2012

This Bill will be introduced on 29 February 2012. The Bill seeks to deter various types of unfair trade practices that may be deployed against consumers. This is a major initiative to enhance consumer protection. The Administration consulted the public on the proposals now contained in the Bill in 2010. There is strong public support for early introduction of the Bill. The public and the Economic Development Panel expressed general support for the Bill and urged for its early implementation. Should Members decide to set up a bills committee to scrutinise this Bill, we suggest that second priority be given to this Bill among bills awaiting Bills Committee slots.

I should be grateful if you would help put forward our proposal for Members' consideration at the House Committee meeting scheduled for 2 March 2012.

Yours sincerely,


(Miss Jennifer Mak)
Director of Administration