

Enclosure

**Legislative Council
Panel on Environmental Affairs**

**Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers on
Producer Responsibility Scheme on Glass Beverage Bottles**

General

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) supports initiatives of the Administration for the promotion of resources conservation and environmental protection. In response to the invitation from the captioned panel, the HKIE is pleased to provide the following views for consideration.

2. The HKIE stresses that source separation is a key element for the success of waste reduction and reusing resources. In this light, we support the Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS) on glass beverage bottles as a first step. Later, if and when condition allows, we agree that the scheme may include other types of glass bottles. However, it is believed that the previously proposed Municipal Solid Waste Charging Scheme could also address the reduction/recycling issues for other types of waste glass materials.
3. The HKIE does not object that under the scheme a fee at an appropriate level be levied on the glass beverage bottle suppliers. For wider benefit to the community, we suggest that the fee collected should be put into a fund designated for supporting the collection and subsequent processing and recycling operations of waste glass beverage bottles. This would encourage wider participation for waste reduction and reuse, while at the same time could assist the development of recycling industry in Hong Kong. However, it may worth to consider a few fee structures to address that different types of glass bottles may have different life spans for reuse/recycling.
4. We opine that the new licensing control for processing waste glass beverage bottles could be operated in two limbs. First, to ensure that the collection of waste glass beverage bottles could be done in an efficient, safe, environmental-friendly and cost effective manner, we suggest that the government could administer tendering process to license and award contract to a few qualified collection operators, each to be responsible for a specified district in the territory. If appropriate, the licensed collectors could be subsidised by the fund mentioned above according to the tonnage of waste glass collected/delivered to the processing or recycling facilities. Second, the waste glass processing/recycling operators should be qualified and licensed by relevant Government department(s) (e.g. Environmental Protection Department) and this licensing requirement would set a model for the licensing control of processing and recycling facilities of other waste types (e.g. waste electrical and electronic equipment) in future.
5. For encouraging and commending good corporate practice in environmental protection, the HKIE agrees that glass beverage bottles suppliers with a satisfactory corporate reuse/recycling plan could be exempted from the payment of recycling fee.

However, the Administration should evaluate the cost effectiveness of introducing such an exemption scheme and prevent the potential loopholes in the scheme. Proper exemption criteria should be clearly established for fairness and transparency, while suitable support should be provided to those small-medium suppliers with genuine difficulty.

6. We expect that after the implementation of the scheme, the market force and mechanism might significantly minimise the disposal of glass beverage bottles for landfills. We would welcome to see more data demonstrating the economic and social values that the scheme could bring to the community, hence further review may be necessary after a few years of implementation. Therefore, we believe that at the moment it is not necessary to implement landfill ban on glass beverage bottles.

7. The HKIE welcomes more practical initiatives for conversion of waste glass beverage bottles into construction materials, and would like the Administration to take the lead in supporting the industry engaged in such operations, as well as in encouraging adoption of these recycled materials in various public and private construction projects.

8. The HKIE suggests the Administration to assist the industry to develop glass bottle recycling processes. We welcome to see that more resources by the Administration would be provided to assist the local industries and research institutions to develop and improve the recycling technologies and explore for more viable and efficient glass recycling products, which in turn would further enhance the effectiveness and public acceptance of the scheme.