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政府總部
發展局
工務科
香港添馬添美道 2 號
政府總部西翼



Works Branch
Development Bureau
Government Secretariat

West Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

本局網址 Our Website: <http://www.devb.gov.hk>
本局檔號 Our Ref.: () in DEVB(W) 510/17/01
來函檔號 Your Ref.:

電話 Tel No.: 3509 8277
傳真 Fax No.: 2801 5034
電郵 E-mail: cl_wong@devb.gov.hk

Fax No. : 2521 8660

Dr Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Chairman of Panel on Development, Legislative Council
Room 814, Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

13 January 2014

Dear Dr Hon LAU,

Provision of Treated Water Supply for Remote Villages

With regard to the letter dated 20 December 2013 addressed to you by Hon TANG Ka-piu and Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen concerning the provision of treated water supply for remote villages, our reply is as follows.

Back in 1980, the Water Supplies Department (WSD), with the assistance of other government departments and Heung Yee Kuk, carried out studies on improving the water supply for over 700 villages in Hong Kong. As at end of 2013, the WSD provides treated water supply for 719 villages, and there are 16 villages not yet provided with treated water supply. Meanwhile, the WSD has recently identified eight more villages, thus bringing the number of villages without treated water supply to 24. Among these villages, the construction works for the treated water supply system for the four villages in Southern District will commence this year and is anticipated to complete in 2016. It will further reduce the number of remote villages without treated water supply to 20. Please refer to **Annex 1** for details.

For these remaining 20 villages, given their sparse population and their remote locations being far away from the urban areas and the existing water supply system, the per capita capital cost for the provision of treated water supply for these remote villages will be high, which is estimated to be from nearly \$200,000 to over \$10 million. Furthermore, their low water consumption will cause stagnant water inside the water mains, and will result in the deterioration of water quality. The WSD will also take account of other factors, such as the availability of other water source and the quality of raw water.

We notice that in some villages with treated water supply, some of their villagers are unwilling to apply to the WSD for treated water supply, while others who have applied are still using the free stream water or well water to supplement their daily consumption for cleaning, flushing, etc. Therefore, the water consumption of these remote villages is often way below our forecast.

In fact, the Government carried out a study on the cost effectiveness of supplying water to remote villages at the request of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in 2001. An information paper¹ was submitted to the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works of LegCo in March 2003, recommending that those proposed treated water supply schemes for remote villages that were not cost effective should be postponed to a more favourable time such as when there is development near these villages rendering the provision of treated water supply more economical or other new circumstances that warrant reconsideration of the schemes.

Currently, the remote villages without treated water supply are using stream water or well water for domestic consumption. The Government always concerns about the water supply in these villages, including the quality and quantity of the raw water supply. There is a clear division of labour among various departments in the management of the raw water supply systems. To meet the basic needs of the villages and improve the living conditions of their residents, the relevant District Offices may, at the request of the villagers, improve the raw water supply systems, if it is technically feasible and resources

¹ LC Paper No. CB(1)1071/02-03(01)

are available, and after consulting with relevant departments. As regards the quality of raw water, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) monitors and tests the quality of raw water regularly by conducting chemical and bacteriological analysis. Generally speaking, the frequency for chemical analysis is once in three to six months while bacteriological analysis will be carried out once in one to two months. If necessary, the FEHD will erect appropriate warning signs to remind villagers to boil the water before drinking. In the event that there is a dry out of the local stream course, the Government will provide assistance including the provision of potable water to meet the need of the residents.

The Government always concerns about and keeps under regular review the water supply in the remote villages. In the past 10 years, the Government has completed the treated water supply systems for 18 remote villages. We will continue to conduct the review on a regular basis. Should the Government decide to provide treated water supply for these remote villages in future, we will submit funding application in accordance with the current procedures for the implementation of the treated water supply system.

Yours sincerely,



(C L Wong)

for Secretary for Development

c.c.

Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Attn: Ms Yuen Sheung Leung)

Director of Home Affair (Attn: Mr Alan CW Yung)

Director of Water Supplies (Attn: Mr Vincent SC Mak)

Annex 1

Remote Villages Without Treated Water Supply

District Council	Name of Village	Remarks
Tai Po	Yuen Tun Ha	
	Lai Chi Chong	
	Wong Chuk Yeung	
	Tung Sam Kei	
	Sham Chung	
	Tung Ping Chau	
Tsuen Wan	Luk Keng (Lantau)	
	Tai Chuen (Northeast Lantau)	
	Tso Wan (Northeast Lantau)	
Islands	Tai Long (South Lantau)	
	Po Toi Island	
	Fan Lau (West Lantau)	
	Yi O (West Lantau)	
	Upper Wong Lung Hang	
	Nim Shue Wan	
	Cheung Sha Lan	
	Sham Ah Shui	
Sha Tin	Mui Tsz Lam	
Tuen Mun	Tin Fu Tsai	
Sai Kung	Tung Lung	
Southern	Tung Ah	Construction works for the treated water supply system will commence this year and is anticipated to complete in 2016
	Tung Ah Pui	
	Ngan Hang	
	Lan Nai Wan	