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President



AmCham

The American Chamber
of Commerce in Hong Kong
1904 Bank of America Tower
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March 13, 2014

Honorable Legislative Councilors
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Honorable Legislative Councilors,

Supporting Landfill Extensions and a New Waste Incinerator as part of a Holistic Action Plan to Tackle Municipal Waste in Hong Kong

The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (“Chamber”) has been closely following the extensive debates on the Environment Infrastructure Projects.

The “Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022” published last year by the Environment Bureau (“EnB”), clearly articulated Hong Kong’s urgent need to take a series of coordinated actions on waste prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery, treatment, and landfills to resolve Hong Kong’s escalating waste problem.

The Environment Panel has been discussing these issues for some time, most notably in March/April 2012 and again in May/June 2013. The Chamber recognizes that there are a range of views in the community on these issues and fully understands the drive of Legislative Councilors to increase efforts to reduce and recycle waste as part of a holistic package of waste management measures. It also accepts the need for Government to address concerns raised by local communities concerned about landfill extensions or the development of incineration facilities close to home.

Looking back at these earlier discussions, we are now two years further on, and the current forecast is that, without extension, capacity at all three landfills will be exhausted by 2019, putting Hong Kong clearly at risk of severe environmental consequences unless immediate action is taken. Time will be needed for the initiatives to reduce waste at source now being introduced or planned to work and the behavioural change needed from the community may only gradually begin to have an impact. In addition, even with the landfill extensions now requested and full implementation of the waste reduction programmes, there is still likely to be a long-term need for a significant amount of landfill space, unless a proportion of the residual waste can be treated by incineration, as is the case in many other developed economies. Incineration is a proven technique for waste reduction and EnB has proposed a range of stringent environmental controls to mitigate the environmental impact of both construction and operation. Energy will be exported as an environmentally friendly by-product when the incineration facility is in use.


Our understanding is that EnB has made significant progress in developing proposals for a more holistic approach and we note the recent publication of a comprehensive strategy for dealing with food and yard waste. We also understand that Government has redoubled efforts to engage, understand and address the concerns of local people living close to the three landfills with proposals for enhanced landfill management and containment, improvements to waste transportation and odour reduction, as well as the announcement of \$1 billion for expediting the development of restored landfills in the recent Policy Address. It is also engaging the local community and other concerned stakeholders over the proposed

location for the incinerator at Shek Kwu Chau. The Chamber is highly concerned that these environmental infrastructure projects, widely agreed by a range of environmental experts and academics alike as being necessary and essential, cannot proceed because district interests and district protests have become the overriding concern, rather than the interests of the community as a whole.

The Chamber appreciates the burden placed on the various districts in extending the existing landfill sites and hosting the location for the new waste incinerator. However, as articulated by EnB, there are no better concrete alternatives available today than extending these landfill sites and planning for residual waste incineration as well as taking concurrent actions such as reducing waste, improving recycling, and improving waste infrastructure. We call upon Legislators to endorse the proposed incinerator and landfill extensions, with approval for the necessary funding, to allow time for other measures to reduce waste at source to work. It is clear that all these actions are urgent and that they must be decisively taken as soon as possible.

The Chamber therefore urges all Legislative Councilors to further engage with the public on the waste issue and also present this issue for constructive debate – and ultimately to support the EnB's "Blueprint" for waste management, including the extension of the three landfill sites and the development of a waste incinerator. AmCham is concerned that if necessary environmental measures are not taken, it would harm the quality of life in Hong Kong which ultimately affects the business environment of our city. The interests of all Hong Kong's people are at stake.

Yours sincerely,



For and on behalf of
The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

CC: Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs (Panel Meeting on March 22, 2014)

Cyd Ho Sau-lan, Legislative Council Member
Chairman, Panel on Environmental Affairs

Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

Wong Kam Sing, JP
Secretary for the Environment

Loh Kung Wai, Christine, JP
Under Secretary for the Environment

Environment Bureau
15/F & 16/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong ("Chamber") is the largest international chamber in Hong Kong and represents a broad and diverse membership.