



**FW: For special meeting of the Legco Panel on Environmental Affairs
(Saturday 22 March 2014) - oral submission of Tom Hope**
Tom Hope to: panel_ea

24/03/2014 07:50

2 attachments



140317_SKC_Brochure_A NECESSARY EVIL_Legco Environment Panel_submission.doc



140118- PG v I Leaflet v.2.pdf

Thank you for allowing me to present my oral submission last Saturday. For the record, here is a written transcript of that presentation, to complement the written submission which appears immediately below in this email:

ARGUMENTS TO LEGCO ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY PANEL ON 22 MARCH 2014 MADE BY TOM HOPE (5.20-6.30pm session)

- You have my written submission. For these three minutes, I want to talk about food waste.
- We know that half the waste now going to landfill is odorous food waste. We know that if we could divert all this food waste from landfill now, we could double the existing landfill life and eliminate the smells and insects which make that landfill so unpleasant for local residents.
- Here's the target commitment of EPD on Food and Yard waste as set out in their report published last month: by 2022, 40% separation and treatment of food waste, with implementing legislation after 8 years and 4 OWTF centres by which to produce low quality compost and/or animal food, with remaining 60% of organic waste to be incinerated and go to landfill.
- I know people who lived in Taipei when they implemented waste separation measures. It took one year to implement 100% waste separation at source.
- If Taipei can do this in one year, why can Hong Kong not do it in one year too?
- EPD will say that right now they don't have anywhere to put the organic waste besides landfill. However, we know that's not true. We know (from submissions of NGOs such as Clear The Air, citing CIWEM consultants familiar with HK sewage infrastructure) that Hong Kong's sewage treatment facilities can easily process current levels of organic food waste, all the more so with its high water content. We just need a territory-wide mechanism for separating it out.
- Maybe it's not really EPD's fault that they cannot immediately implement such a system. To have a real impact, there must be political will and power. I've talked to those who consult the government on environmental issues. These people know what's really happening on the ground in Hong Kong. From them I've learned that KSW and his team do not have the power to implement effective, territory-wide policies. In particular, they cannot secure the mandatory legislation and cross-departmental collaboration required.

- We also know that if the political will is there, Economic Services Bureau could push through the legislation and funding for infrastructure to divert all this food waste within 1 year. We know Legco will not stand in the way of this because it is to everyone's benefit and will create lots of jobs suitable for the 1M+ HK residents living in poverty.
- That will allow easily enough time for further waste reduction measures and alternative technologies to be trialled for treatment of the residual waste – alternatives such as gasification, which (a) do not require landfill extension and (b) allow the landfills to be reclaimed over time.
- In this way, HK can lead the way within the Pearl River Delta for a superior solution for waste management. Shenzhen has petitioned against landfill extension but they are ramping up their incinerator programme. We are all in this together, not just in HK but in the Pearl River Delta generally.
- I admire the people of HK because they are pragmatic and resourceful with a wonderful capacity to do things quickly when they see it is to their benefit. Look how quickly the Octopus card came into effect here – people could see it made sense and used it.
- The same can be true of an intelligent food waste separation and reduction programme such as the one now proposed by Clear The Air and endorsed by the NTCG.
- If Legco now votes against the EPD proposals, Legco will force the issue to be dealt with at an appropriately higher level – to implement effective, territory wide policies on waste separation and reduction now by which to put HK truly on track for a 'zero waste' future.

For the special meeting this Saturday 22nd March to discuss the administration's proposals for landfill expansion plus SKC incinerator, the following builds on the submission made to the Panel prior to its consideration on 24 February of the administration's proposals for extension of existing landfill and construction of an incinerator at Shek Kwu Chau. It sets out compelling reasons for Legco representatives to deny or defer approval of those proposals:

1. To extend existing landfills is against the wishes of all local and district representative bodies for the New Territories.
2. It follows that it is also against their wishes to build the SKC incinerator, since this technology necessitates landfill extension (in which to dump its ash residues - which is why ENB/EPD continue to push for landfill expansion, even with the proposed SKC incinerator operating at 3,000 tpd).
3. Landfill expansion is not required if the alternative thermal treatment technology of gasification is adopted instead – see (a) attached report 'A Necessary Evil?', circulated to EAP members in April 2012, updated to reference additional gasification facilities elsewhere in the world operating to the requisite scale and (b) attached report of the New Territories Concern Group comparing gasification v incineration.
4. An especial advantage of gasification is that it leaves no residues needing to be landfilled.
5. The New Territories Concern Group also recommends immediate implementation of measures to separate out organic waste so that this no longer goes to landfill. Half of the waste currently going to landfill is organic waste. It is this organic waste which makes the landfills so unpleasant for those who live nearby because of the smell, insects, leaching etc.
6. The ENB/EPD paper states (para 9(k), page 6) that upon full commissioning of the Sludge

Treatment Facility in Tuen Mun by end 2014 'odorous sludge will no longer be landfilled'. This is simply not so. The STF's stated capacity is 2,000 tpd but Hong Kong's daily output of odorous (ie organic) waste is over 4,000 tpd. Even if it had the necessary capacity, territory wide measures are not in place to separate out organic from other waste for processing by this STF; until they are, landfills will continue to absorb this odorous waste because it cannot be sent elsewhere. (This is tacitly accepted by ENB/EPD in their proposals for food and yard waste published at the end of last month which sets out an optimized objective – based on the construction of 4 OWTF centres - of 40% separation and treatment of food waste by 2022, with the remaining 60% organic waste to be incinerated or landfilled.)

7. A feasible territory-wide plan to separate organic from other waste has been put to Chief Secretary Carrie Lam and Secretary for the Environment K.S.Wong by NGO Clear The Air, as previously circulated to all EAP Legco members. This plan can eliminate odorous waste from and halve total waste now going to landfill. This plan can therefore double the projected lifespan of existing landfill. This plan is supported by the New Territories Concern Group and other similarly representative bodies. This plan can be operational within 1 year, diverting up to 100% of food waste from landfill at a fraction of the cost of ENB/EPD's proposals of last month.
8. Doubling the life of existing landfill allows time for a pilot gasification plant operating at requisite scale (eg 400 tpd) to demonstrate its suitability for processing Hong Kong's residual waste. If initiated now, such a plant could be operational by 2016/7.
9. The New Territories Concern Group, after canvassing the views of those living and working in the New Territories and after making a fact-finding mission to Europe in September 2013 to review gasification facilities, now recommends and guarantees local support for a gasification pilot plant adjacent to an existing landfill.
10. The NTCG recommends this because (a) it immediately diverts waste from landfill (b) it is a cleaner and more cost-effective way to deal with residual waste (c) it is modular, allowing increased capacity to suit projected waste flows (d) even if it exceeds projected need, it can be used to backmine and so reclaim existing landfills for other uses (eg residential/commercial).
11. EAP members who went on an equivalent fact-finding visit to Europe earlier this month are now all the better placed to confirm that contemporary gasification technology is feasible for immediate implementation to the requisite scale in Hong Kong.
12. ENB/EPD proposals should in any event be rejected until real and immediate territory-wide steps are taken to implement their proposed RRR (reduce-recycle-reuse) strategy by:
 - a. Separation of organic waste
 - b. Waste charging
 - c. Improved recycling.
13. For the same or lesser cost to that now proposed by ENB/EPD, these alternative strategies can, within a 3 to 4 year period ie by 2018 latest:
 - a. Double the life of existing landfill
 - b. Eliminate odour, flies etc from existing landfill
 - c. Divert non-organic waste from landfill to a pilot gasification plant
 - d. Incentivize a 'zero waste' approach for Hong Kong requiring NO further extension of landfill and (using gasification plants) reclamation of existing landfill for other use by backmining.

Thank you for your attention.

Tom Hope

Territories Concern Group)

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