

Submission from ALBA Integrated Waste Solutions (Hong Kong) Limited

Representation to the Bills Committee on Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Product Container) Bill 2015

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- Glass is a valuable material as it requires a great deal of energy and water to create it
- Glass is collected separately in most advanced economies – this is done by use of distributed bins in public areas (first introduced in the UK in 1977) or increasingly by door-step collection
- Europe has achieved high levels of glass recycling, but this has been mainly as a result of the imposition mandatory recovery targets and charges under the Extended Producer Responsibility (Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS) in Hong Kong)
- Glass is heavy and makes a significant proportion of landfill tonnage
- To use glass containers only once and send to landfill for disposal is waste of resources – 1 tonne of glass that is recycled saves more than one additional tonne of raw materials
- There is a general recognition by the public in Hong Kong that bottles have a value and they are keen to know that they are recycled
- As we move into municipal solid waste charging the public are keen to know that there are alternative places to take their glass containers
- It is recognized that the collection of glass is expensive – the cost can be alleviated by the PRS
- Ground glass is an established construction aggregate replacement in many countries – but it does require construction specifications to allow its use
- The current market in Hong Kong limits alternative uses of glass to construction at present. Glass make a very good sand replacement which is particularly important as we are running short of river sand for construction
- It should be noted that colour separated glass has a higher value. In other advanced economies technologies exist which allow mixed glass to be separated into different colour schemes.
- Remelting glass (which may be done an unlimited amount of times) makes a very large carbon saving compared with making it from virgin materials and is an important activity as we move towards the Closed Loop Economy
- By capturing say 80% of the glass bottles thrown away in HK each year more than 50,000t could be available for processing which could be an attractive market opportunity.
- What is being proposed for Hong Kong is a good starting point which will allow more advanced solutions for the re-use of glass to be adopted in the future