

Consumer Council

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

1. The Consumer Council (CC) is pleased to provide views on the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Product Container) (Amendment) Bill 2015.
2. CC supports the “polluter pays” principle. CC considers it appropriate to extend the scope of the Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS) which will contribute towards sustainability of the environment and maximize the reuse value of waste.
3. With regard to the scope of regulation of product containers, CC finds acceptable the proposed phased approach with glass beverage containers targeted in the first stage and containers of other products covered in future. CC is glad to see the proposal that other glass containers including food and sauce containers will also be accepted for collection after proper rinsing.
4. In addition to the general public living in housing estates and residential buildings, a lot of glass beverage containers will have been discarded by catering services such as eateries, bars and restaurants in their daily business. To encourage active participation from waste producers, CC believes that glass container collection points should be increased and conveniently located and frequent collection should be made to accommodate more glass containers which are usually bulky. With relevant businesses more willing to help separate glass beverage containers from the waste and put them in glass collection points, the amount of glass containers recovered will increase for the collection services to benefit from economy of scale.
5. CC understands that after collection, waste glass containers will undergo proper treatment process to turn the waste into reusable resources such as construction materials, e.g. eco-pavers, partition bricks, cullet or sand. However, representatives of related industries have commented that the higher cost of recycled materials compared to conventional materials has deterred the use of recycled materials. To ensure that glass container

recycling achieves a useful purpose, CC is of the view that exploration of new applications of the recycled materials is needed. At the same time, it may be necessary to give incentive for industries to use recycled materials to boost demand for them.

6. CC believes that proper disposal of glass containers requires all stakeholders, from government, manufacturers, suppliers to consumers, to have a proper understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. Territory-wide publicity campaign will have to be in place to increase awareness for the community at large to contribute towards glass container recycling.
7. In the meantime, continued efforts should be made to encourage the community to practise waste reduction and proper waste disposal in everyday life.

November 2015

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