

立法會
Legislative Council

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**Paper for the House Committee meeting
on 3 July 2015**

**Proposed duty visit to the United States
by the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

Purpose

This paper seeks the permission of the House Committee for the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") to conduct a duty visit to the United States to study its experience in regulation of food truck operations and regulatory control of imported food products.

Background

2. The Panel monitors and examines Government policies and issues of public concern relating to food safety, environmental hygiene and agriculture and fisheries. In his 2015-2016 Budget Speech, the Financial Secretary requested relevant government departments to implement the proposal as early as possible to facilitate alfresco dining operation, and to consider introducing food trucks to the mix of Hong Kong's existing food scene. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau has, in collaboration with the Food and Health Bureau as well as the relevant departments (including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department), begun studying overseas experiences in various aspects relating to food truck operations. In the light of the Administration's proposal, the Panel considers it an opportune time to conduct a duty visit to study overseas experience in regulation of food truck operations, including licensing requirements, mode of operation, food safety and environmental hygiene issues and the enforcement mechanism, etc. The Panel would also like to take this opportunity to learn about overseas experience in regulatory control of imported food products.

3. After considering the relevant regulatory framework governing food truck operations in overseas places, the Panel has agreed to visit New York and San Francisco of the United States where there are a high prevalence of food trucks operating and different regulatory approaches have been adopted to regulate food truck operations. Members of the Panel are also interested in studying the experience of the United States in ensuring safety of imported food products under its existing laws and regulatory framework. Members note that the New York and San Francisco District Offices are two of the larger district offices of the United States Food and Drug Administration which oversees the safety of all domestic and imported food products, except for meat and poultry. They would like to meet with the relevant officials to exchange views on the regulatory system for imported food products.

Proposed duty visit by the Panel

Objectives of the proposed duty visit

4. The objectives of the proposed duty visit are –
- (a) to obtain first-hand information on the regulatory framework governing the food truck operations and to understand the regulatory system for imported food products;
 - (b) to study their experience relating to the operation of food trucks, including licensing requirements, mode of operation, food safety and environmental hygiene issues, the enforcement mechanism and trade facilitation initiatives;
 - (c) to study the measures adopted by the relevant regulatory authorities in ensuring safety of imported food products, such as surveillance of imported food at the ports of entry; and
 - (d) to exchange views with the relevant government organizations and parties on the operation of food trucks and the regulatory control of imported food products.

Visit programme

5. The proposed duty visit is scheduled to be conducted from 13 to 19 September 2015. The tentative outline of programme is in **Appendix I**. The detailed visit programme is being drawn up with the assistance of the Consulate General of the United States in Hong Kong and the Economic and

Trade Offices of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in New York and San Francisco.

Participants of the visit

6. A circular has been issued to invite Panel members and other non-Panel Members to indicate interest in joining the visit. As at 2 July 2015, a total of four Members (including one non-Panel Member) have indicated interest in taking part in the visit. A list of the participants of the visit is in **Appendix II**.

7. The Panel will also invite officials from the relevant bureaux to join the visit to facilitate members' understanding of the applicability of the United States's experience to Hong Kong. The expenses incurred by the government officials, if any, participating in the visit will be borne by the Government.

Funding arrangements

8. As approved by The Legislative Council Commission, each Member is provided with an overseas duty visit account ("ODV") of \$55,000 for the purpose of duty visits outside Hong Kong organized by committees of the Council. The fund in the account is for use by the Member in a four-year term. Any expenditure incurred in one term in excess of the approved allocation has to be paid by the Member personally. If by the end of a term there are unused balances in Members' ODV accounts, the funds available will be used to pay those Members who have expended more than their allocation, in proportion to their excess qualifying expenditure. Members who have not served out their terms will not be entitled to such reimbursements.

9. A preliminary estimate of the expenditure (including airfare, hotel accommodation, meals, in-town travelling and sundry expenses) to be incurred by each participating Member for the proposed duty visit is about \$29,150 (for economy class air passage), \$38,900 (for premium economy class air passage) and \$123,950 (for business class air passage). A breakdown of the estimated expenditure is in **Appendix III**. The actual expenditure will vary subject to the final visit programme, and the airfare and hotel room rates at the time of confirmation.

Advice sought

10. Rule 22(v) of the House Rules provides that should any Panel consider it necessary to undertake any activities outside Hong Kong under the name of the Panel of the Council, the prior permission of the House Committee shall be

sought.

11. The House Committee's permission is sought for the Panel to conduct the overseas duty visit as proposed.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
2 July 2015

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Proposed duty visit to the United States

Proposed timing 13 September (Sunday) to 19 September (Saturday) 2015

(Tentative outline of programme #)

Date	Programme
13 September 2015 (Sun)	→ On flight from Hong Kong to New York Arrival at night
<u>New York</u>	
14 September 2015 (Mon)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meeting with the relevant officials and agencies (such as New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene) responsible for formulating the policies and implementing measures governing the food truck operations 2. Meeting with food truck operators and conduct on-site visits to understand food truck operations in the city area
15 September 2015 (Tue)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Meeting with officials of the Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Inspection Service to understand their experience in the regulatory control of imported food products
<u>San Francisco</u>	
16 September 2015 (Wed) *	<p style="text-align: center;">→ Depart from New York to San Francisco in the morning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meeting with the relevant officials and agencies (such as San Francisco Department of Public Works; San Francisco Planning Department and San Francisco Department of Public Health) responsible for formulating the policies and

Date	Programme
17 September 2015 (Thur)	implementing measures governing the food truck operations 2. Meeting with food truck operators and conduct on-site visits to understand food truck operations in the city area 3. Meeting with officials of the Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Inspection Service to understand their experience in the regulatory control of imported food products
18 September 2015 (Fri)	→ Depart from San Francisco to Hong Kong in the afternoon
19 September 2015 (Sat)	→ On flight from San Francisco to Hong Kong Arrival in the evening

The detailed visit programme is subject to confirmation with the receiving organizations.

* Subject to the arrangements with the receiving organizations, the delegation may leave New York at night on 15 September 2015 and arrive at San Francisco at night on the same day.

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Proposed duty visit to the United States

**List of participants
(as at 2 July 2015)**

Panel Members

Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

Non-Panel Member

Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
2 July 2015

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Proposed duty visit to the United States

Tentative estimate of the expenditure

Duration of visit : 13 to 19 September 2015 (7 days)

Routing of visit : Hong Kong / New York/ San Francisco / Hong Kong

Breakdown of expenses

Items	Estimated expenses HK\$ (per person)		
	<u>Economy Class</u>	<u>Premium Economy Class</u>	<u>Business Class</u>
1. Air passage ^(Note 1) (Cathy Pacific Airlines) Hong Kong/New York/ San Francisco/Hong Kong (American Airlines) New York - San Francisco	10,788	20,538	105,608 (Note 2)
2. Hotel accommodation (60% of the subsistence allowance) ^(Note 3) (a) New York (3 nights) (b) San Francisco (2 nights)		7,389 4,298	
3. Meals, in-town travelling and sundries (40% of the subsistence allowance) ^(Note 4) (a) New York (b) San Francisco		3,304 3,035	
4. Travel insurance		300	
TOTAL :	29,114	38,864	123,934

NOTE :

1. Airfare quotation obtained in mid-June 2015. Price is inclusive of tax and surcharges.
2. The estimated expenditure of \$105,608 covers the fares for business class air passages from Hong Kong to New York and from San Francisco to Hong Kong, as well as economy class air passage from New York to San Francisco. If a midnight flight from Hong Kong to New York is selected,

a lower level of expenses will be incurred.

3. The expenditure for hotel accommodation covers room charges and an estimate of about 18% of hotel accommodation-related taxes. Under the current overseas subsistence allowance rates for destinations in the United States, hotel accommodation-related taxes are not included. Hence, hotel accommodation-related taxes paid during duty visits in the United States will be reimbursed on "actual-expenses" basis in accordance with the relevant guidelines applicable to civil servants.
4. Other expenditure including hospitality, local group transportation, interpretation services and souvenirs will be charged against other votes of the Secretariat. Where the actual cost of in-town traveling expenses is separately paid for by the Secretariat, 5% of the subsistence allowance will be deducted.
5. Exchange rates as at mid-June 2015 –
USD\$1 = HK\$7.781
6. The actual total expenditure will vary subject to the final visit programme, and the airfare and hotel room rates at the time of confirmation.

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2 July 2015