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(Translation)

8 May 2015

Ms. Debbie T. S. YAU
Council Business Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex,
1 Legislative Council Road,
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Yau,

**Subcommittee on Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by
Garbage) Regulation and Merchant Shipping (Prevention of
Pollution by Garbage) Regulation (Repeal) Regulation**

**Discharge of large amount of refuse
from vessels into Hong Kong waters**

Thank you for referring to us the letter of 5 May 2015 from Hon. Albert CHAN expressing concerns on the discharge of garbage within Hong Kong waters. The replies from the Marine Department (“MD”) to the matters raised in the letter are set out in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the problem of refuse accumulation at Lap Sap Wan, MD has conducted site investigation and could not find any floating refuse in the water areas nearby. According to the findings of the Marine Refuse Study conducted by the Government's Inter-departmental Working Group on Clean Shorelines, more than 80% of marine refuse in Hong Kong waters originates from land-based sources, with shorelines and recreational activities being the predominant sources. Hence, the refuse accumulated on the beach of Lap Sap Wan should not be mainly caused by discharge from vessels. Despite this, MD will actively cooperate with other departments concerned and assist in cleaning up the refuse accumulated at Lap Sap Wan, subject to permissible weather and sea conditions.

To tackle the marine refuse problem, MD has all along been providing free of charge domestic refuse collection service to vessels staying at anchorages and typhoon shelters in Hong Kong waters. Over the past three years, an average of around 4 300 tonnes of domestic refuse was collected from vessels each year.

MD also endeavors to clean up floating refuse in Hong Kong waters. Currently, MD's contractor deploys about 70 vessels of different types to perform marine scavenging service on a daily basis from about 0830 hours to about 1800 hours throughout the year. Besides, since MD is responsible for cleaning up refuse at foreshore shallow waters and below tidal water line, the contractor also operates two foreshore cleansing teams to clean up foreshore areas according to the conditions of individual beaches. Over the past three years, an average of about 11 000 tonnes of floating refuse was collected each year.

To prevent refuse dumping at sea, MD has been carrying out continuous publicity and education activities as well as law enforcement operations to raise the public's awareness of keeping the sea clean and to minimise the dumping of refuse into the sea at source. On publicity and education, MD frequently works with other government departments and non-government organisations to organise promotion activities, such as publicising the message of keeping typhoon shelters clean to fishermen organisations during the periods of Lunar New Year and fish moratorium.

They also visit yacht clubs, fish markets, marine works sites, mariculture farms and anchorages to publicise the message of keeping the sea clean to the persons-in-charge of the vessels and workers in these places, and to remind them to properly dispose of refuse generated from their operations and avoid dumping refuse into the sea.

In respect of law enforcement, MD will take enforcement actions against marine littering offenders when they perform their daily routine duties. They will also conduct special anti-marine littering operations during non-office hours, Sunday and public holidays to achieve deterrent effect. Over the past three years, 22 marine littering offenders were prosecuted by MD. MD also carries out random inspection on marine works sites to ensure that the works have been carried out in compliance with the conditions for preventing generation of floating refuse.

MD implements the afore-mentioned measures to tackle marine refuse problem for ensuring safe navigation of vessels in Hong Kong waters.

Should you have any queries on the above, please feel free to contact the undersigned at 3509 8257. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
(signed)
(Joyce Chan)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.

MD (Attn: Mr. FL CHEUK)

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