

**For discussion on
15 December 2014**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Implementation of the Extension of
the Plastic Shopping Bag Charging to All Retail Outlets**

PURPOSE

This paper reports on the trade facilitation and publicity actions to prepare for the implementation of the extension of the Plastic Shopping Bag Charging (PSB Charging), which will take effect on 1 April 2015.

BACKGROUND

2. The “Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022” (the Action Blueprint) maps out a comprehensive strategy for waste management in the coming ten years with a view to tackling our waste crisis. One of the items in the Action Blueprint is to take concurrent actions to drive behavioural change to reduce waste at source through policies and legislation, including Producer Responsibility Schemes (PRS).

3. The Environmental Levy Scheme on Plastic Shopping Bags (the levy scheme) was launched on 7 July 2009 as the first mandatory PRS. It sought to address the problem of excessive plastic shopping bag (PSB) use in some 3 500 chain or large retail outlets, mostly supermarkets, convenience stores, personal health and beauty stores, and drug stores. The number of PSBs distributed to customers by the registered retailers has been reduced significantly by up to 90% ^[1] since its implementation. However, the excessive use of PSBs outside the scheme remains a serious problem.

¹ We estimated that about 65% of the pre-levy PSB distribution under retail categories could be attributable to registered retail outlets under the levy scheme. Taking into account such estimation, the reduction in PSBs distributed by registered retailers since the launch of the levy scheme in July 2009 could be as high as 90%.

4. In May 2011, a three-month consultation on whether and how to extend the existing levy scheme was conducted. On the whole, the community was supportive of an extended coverage so as to further address the problem of excessive PSB use. The proposal to extend the levy scheme was presented to the Legislative Council's Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) in November 2011. With the support of the EA Panel, the Product Eco-responsibility (Amendment) Bill 2013 (Amendment Bill) was introduced into the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 8 May 2013. The Amendment Bill for the extension of the PSB Charging to all retail outlets was approved by the LegCo on 19 March 2014, and will come into effect on 1 April 2015.

SCOPE OF THE EXTENDED PSB CHARGING

5. The extended PSB Charging adopts a maximum coverage to include all retail sales of goods in the territory irrespective of the scale of the business (e.g. chain stores, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and hawkers) and the nature of the business. The total number of retail outlets covered under the extended PSB Charging is estimated to be increased from some 3 500 to over 100 000.

OBLIGATIONS OF SELLER OF GOODS

6. Under the extended PSB Charging, a seller of goods by retail shall charge the customer an amount not less than 50 cents for each PSB provided and shall not offer any rebate or discount to the customer with the effect of directly offsetting the PSB charge. To ease the administrative burden and compliance cost of SMEs, a "retention" approach would be adopted whereby the seller may retain and handle the PSB charge without the need of remitting to the Government. We encourage sellers to donate the income generated from the PSB charge to support suitable environmental causes.

EXEMPTION ARRANGEMENTS

7. Under the extension of the PSB Charging, the following uses of PSBs will be exempted from the charging requirement: –

- PSBs that are used to carry only items of food, drink or medicine (collectively as "foodstuff") for human or animal consumption due to food hygiene reasons;

- PSBs that are used for pre-packaging or those forming part of the goods; and
- PSBs provided with the service tendered, without involving the retail sales of goods.

TRADE FACILITATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES

8. In order to facilitate the retailers to prepare for the implementation of PSB Charging, we have commenced extensive trade facilitation and publicity activities to arouse the awareness of the various retail trades. As of 1 December 2014, 31 briefings for some 60 trade associations were held to promulgate the legislative requirements and provide follow up advice on the preparations to facilitate the implementation of the PSB Charging. The briefings held and the list of trade associations/organisations covered are summarized in **Annex A**. In addition, briefings at each of the 18 districts targeting at local small retailers in the districts are being held in collaboration with the District Councils. The briefings organised for October till end of this year are also presented in **Annex A**.

9. Aside from the reaching out activities, we also publicise the extended PSB Charging at a dedicated website (http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/psb_charging) to present the implementation details and make available publicity materials for download for reference by the retail trade operators. Publicity materials in the form of stickers and tent cards for display at shopfront and cashier counters, as well as information sheets and posters for introducing the PSB Charging are being widely distributed to retail operators in the reaching out and publicity activities. In addition, we operate a dedicated hotline (Tel: 3152 2299) with service hours from 9 am to 10 pm daily (seven days a week) to handle enquiries from the trade and the general public.

10. In the run-up to the launch of the PSB Charging, we would further step up the trade facilitation activities. Starting in January 2015, we would arrange visits to all the districts to distribute publicity materials to local retail outlets and to publicise the commencement of the PSB Charging on 1 April 2015. For the shopping malls and large retail outlets, we would work with retail operators and property managers in raising the awareness of their frontline staff, through joint visits, training events, briefings etc., so they are well prepared to implement the charging and exemption arrangements. During the initial launch of the PSB Charging, we would also engage trained contract personnel to be stationed at major retail hotspots, for example major shopping malls, department stores and supermarkets, who would help explain the PSB Charging requirements to customers and provide support to retailers.

11. As the successful implementation of the PSB Charging requires the participation of the general public to make behavioural change in adopting the habit of “Bring Your Own Bag” (BYOB), we are embarking on a series of publicity and public education programmes to raise public awareness of BYOB and the upcoming extension of the PSB Charging. We are working with the District Councils to organise publicity and public education activities, such as carnivals, roving exhibitions and promotion booths, in all eighteen districts. These activities are being organised by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) engaged by District Councils under the Community Participation Programme in Environmental Protection 2014/15. The current list of publicity and public education activities is summarized at **Annex B**. In addition, we are also working with a number of green groups to help reinforce the green message of BYOB in the local community and at the same time to encourage retailers to take active steps in further reducing the distribution of PSBs to complement the PSB Charging.

12. To build up the momentum, we are embarking on a programme of publicity activities to widely promulgate both the BYOB green message and the commencement of the extended PSB Charging in the coming months. Key messages targeting both the general public and trade include the full implementation of the PSB Charging on 1 April 2015; both consumers and retailers to actively encourage the habit of BYOB and to minimize the distribution of PSBs; and also the introduction of a fixed penalty of \$2,000 on retailers who violate the law. These messages would be disseminated through various public media and channels, such as TV and radio APIs, promotion and advertisements at public transports, shopping malls, and housing estates. Road shows and kick-off ceremonies would also be held to tie in with the launch in the beginning of April 2015.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE PSB CHARGING

13. Enforcement actions are necessary to provide deterrent effect against contravention of the extended PSB Charging. After the law becomes effective from 1 April 2015, we would conduct random checks and mystery shopping at retail outlets of different districts. A dedicated hotline will also be set up for the public to make reports of suspected violations. We will conduct follow up investigations to the reports. Under the law, a fixed penalty notice of \$2,000 will be issued to retailers found not charging for PSBs provided at the time of sale. For repeated or systemic contraventions, we would consider prosecution through the issue of Summons.

ADVICE SOUGHT

14. Members are invited to note the actions in hand as reported in this paper to prepare for the implementation of the extended PSB Charging in April 2015.

Environmental Protection Department
December 2014

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Briefings for Trade Associations and Local Retailers

Table 1: Briefings conducted or would be conducted during August to December 2014

	No. of briefings for trade associations	No. of briefings for local retailers
August 2014	7	---
September 2014	5	---
October 2014	11	1
November 2014	8	8
December 2014	4	9
Total	35	18

Table 2: List of trade associations/ organisations that have attended or made arrangements to attend the briefings

1.	Association of Restaurant Managers
2.	Century Small and Medium Business Association
3.	China Society of Practitioners of Chinese Medicine Limited
4.	Chinese Medicine Merchants Association Limited
5.	Chiu Chow Overseas Food Trade Merchants Association
6.	Coalition of Hong Kong Newspaper and Magazine Merchants
7.	Confectioners & Bakers Association of Hong Kong
8.	Educational Booksellers' Association Limited
9.	Federation of Hong Kong, Kowloon and New Territories Hawkers Associations
10.	Federation of International SME
11.	Hong Kong & Kowloon Chinese Medicine Merchants Association Limited
12.	Hong Kong & Kowloon Electrical Appliances Merchants Association Limited
13.	Hong Kong (SME) Economic and Trade Promotional Association Limited
14.	Hong Kong Association for Promotion & Development of Small and Medium Enterprises
15.	Hong Kong Bar & Club Association
16.	Hong Kong Book & Stationery Industry Association
17.	Hong Kong Dental Association Limited

18.	Hong Kong Department Stores & Commercial Staff General Union
19.	Hong Kong Doctors Union
20.	Hong Kong Dried Sea Food & Grocery Merchants Association Limited
21.	Hong Kong Electronics Industry Council
22.	Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants & Related Trades Limited
23.	Hong Kong Flower Retailers Association
24.	Hong Kong Footwear Association Limited
25.	Hong Kong Furniture & Decoration Trade Association Limited
26.	Hong Kong General Chamber of Pharmacy Limited
27.	Hong Kong Hair Dressing & Make-up Trade Workers General Union
28.	Hong Kong Jewellers' & Goldsmiths' Association Limited
29.	Hong Kong Jewellery & Jade Manufacturers Association
30.	Hong Kong Jewelry Manufacturers' Association
31.	Hong Kong Newspaper Hawker Association
32.	Hong Kong Playground Association
33.	Hong Kong Professional Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing Association Limited
34.	Hong Kong Promotion Association for Small and Medium Enterprises Limited
35.	Hong Kong Record Merchants Association
36.	Hong Kong Retail Management Association
37.	Hong Kong Small & Medium Enterprises General Association
38.	Hong Kong Small and Medium Enterprises Association
39.	Hong Kong Trade Services Council
40.	Hong Kong Wearing Apparel Industry Employees General Union
41.	Hong Kong & Kowloon Sauce & Preserved Fruit Amalgamated Employers Association
42.	Institution of Dining Art
43.	International General Chinese Herbalists and Medicine Professionals Association Limited
44.	Quality Tourism Services Association
45.	Sin-Hua Herbalists' & Herb Dealers' Promotion Society Limited
46.	SME Global Alliance
47.	The Association for Hong Kong Catering Services Management Limited
48.	The Association of Licentiates of Medical Council of Hong Kong
49.	The Chamber of Hong Kong Computer Industry
50.	The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce
51.	The Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong
52.	The Cosmetic & Perfumery Association of Hong Kong Limited
53.	The Federation of Hong Kong Footwear Limited

54.	The General Chamber of Hong Kong Ceramic Tiles and Sanitary Wares Limited
55.	The Hong Kong & Kowloon Electric Trade Association
56.	The Hong Kong & Kowloon General Merchandise Merchants' Association Limited
57.	The Hong Kong Association of Private Practice Optometrists
58.	The Hong Kong Electronics Industries Association Limited
59.	The Hong Kong Chinese Importers' & Exporters' Association
60.	The Hong Kong Food Council Limited
61.	The Hong Kong Food, Drink & Grocery Association
62.	The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
63.	The Hong Kong General Chamber of Small and Medium Business
64.	The Hong Kong Medical Association
65.	The Hong Kong Medicine Dealers' Guild
66.	The Kowloon Chinese Herbalists Association Limited
67.	The Kowloon Pearls, Precious Stones, Jade, Gold and Silver Ornament Merchants Association
68.	The Laundry Association of Hong Kong Limited

Table 3: Briefing schedule at 18 Districts for local retailers

No.	Date	District	Venue	Remarks
1.	30 Oct 2014	Central and Western	Sheung Wan Civic Centre	Co-organised with Central and Western DC
2.	4 Nov 2014	Wan Chai	Leighton Hill Community Hall	Co-organised with Wan Chai DC
3.	6 Nov 2014	Eastern	Quarry Bay Community Hall	Dissemination of briefing information by Eastern DC
4.	17 Nov 2014	Shatin	Lung Hang Estate Community Centre	Supported by Shatin DC
5.	20 Nov 2014	Wong Tai Sin	Wong Tai Sin Community Centre	Dissemination of briefing information by Wong Tai Sin DC
6.	21 Nov 2014	Sham Shui Po	Mei Foo Community Hall	Co-organised with Sham Shui Po DC
7.	25 Nov 2014	Tai Po	Tai Po Community Centre	Co-organised with Tai Po DC
8.	26 Nov 2014	Kwun Tong	Kwun Tong Community Centre	Co-organised with Kwun Tong DC
9.	27 Nov 2014	Yuen Long	Long Ping Community Hall	Dissemination of briefing information by Yuen Long DC
10.	2 Dec 2014	Kowloon City	Hung Hom Community Hall	Supported by Kowloon City DC
11.	3 Dec 2014	North	Cheung Wah Community Hall	Supported by North DC
12.	4 Dec 2014	Tuen Mun	Tuen Mun Town Centre Community Hall	Co-organised with Tuen Mun DC
13.	8 Dec 2014	Yau Tsim Mong	SKH All Saints' Middle School	Co-organised with Yau Tsim Mong DC
14.	9 Dec 2014	Kwai Tsing	Lai King Community Hall	Co-organised with Kwai Tsing DC
15.	10 Dec 2014	Islands	Tung Chung Community Hall	Dissemination of briefing information by Islands DC

Annex A

No.	Date	District	Venue	Remarks
16.	11 Dec 2014	Southern	Wah Kwai Community Centre	Co-organised with Southern DC
17.	12 Dec 2014	Tsuen Wan	Princess Alexandra Community Centre	Supported by Tsuen Wan DC
18.	16 Dec 2014	Sai Kung	Hang Hau Community Hall	Co-organised with Sai Kung DC

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List of Promotion Activities on PSB Charging Organised by District Councils

No.	District Council	Promotion Activity Name
November 2014		
1.	Central & Western	膠袋收費知多 D
2.	Kwai Tsing	「全面推行塑膠購物袋收費」地區推廣
3.	Kwai Tsing	「全面推行塑膠購物袋收費」地區展覽
4.	Islands	「社區減廢行動-不浪費、多再用、精明回收」 推廣嘉年華
5.	Islands	「社區減廢行動-不浪費、多再用、精明回收」 宣傳話劇
6.	Southern	鴨脷洲「玻璃回收島」計劃暨惜物減廢行動啟動禮
7.	Tsuen Wan	製作推廣自備環保購物袋故事書
8.	Yau Tsim Mong	油尖旺區社區減廢行動
December 2014		
9.	Central & Western	膠袋收費知多 D
10.	Islands	「社區減廢行動-不浪費、多再用、精明回收」 宣傳話劇
11.	North	「膠袋收費你要知」地區遊戲和資訊攤位日
12.	Sai Kung	環保活動大本營
13.	Sai Kung	「自備購物袋約章/BYOB Charter」*
14.	Sha Tin	「Fun 享購物袋」*
15.	Tai Po	樂活大埔常善救物 BYOB
16.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」環保-人人自備購物袋推廣活動 @「屋邨是我家·減廢靠大家」啟動嘉年華
17.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」環保-人人自備購物袋推廣活動 @「屋邨是我家·資源善用靠大家」
18.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」環保-人人自備購物袋推廣活動
19.	Wong Tai Sin	「絕膠行動」*
20.	Yau Tsim Mong	油尖旺區社區減廢行動
January 2015		
21.	Central & Western	膠袋收費知多 D
22.	Central & Western	「膠袋收費知多 D」記者會

No.	District Council	Promotion Activity Name
23.	Islands	「社區減廢行動-不浪費、多再用、精明回收」 宣傳話劇
24.	Kowloon City	「膠袋收費你要知」地區巡迴面談
25.	Kowloon City	「膠袋收費你要知」地區遊戲和資訊攤位日
26.	Kwai Tsing	環保新世「袋」
27.	Kwun Tong	牛頭角上邨無膠袋日
28.	North	「膠袋收費你要知」地區巡迴面談
29.	North	「膠袋收費你要知」地區遊戲和資訊攤位日
30.	Sham Shui Po	「樂用環布袋」啟動儀式
31.	Sham Shui Po	「樂用環布袋」街站 *
32.	Tai Po	樂活大埔常善救物 BYOB
33.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」環保-人人自備購物袋推廣活動
34.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」環保-人人自備購物袋推廣活動 @「綠色關愛運動 2014」
35.	Yau Tsim Mong	油尖旺區社區減廢行動
February 2015		
36.	Islands	「社區減廢行動-不浪費、多再用、精明回收」 宣傳話劇
37.	Sai Kung	「環保嘉年華」
38.	Tai Po	樂活大埔常善救物 BYOB
39.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」環保-人人自備購物袋推廣活動 @「永續無窮-繪影尋珍遊屯門」成果禮
40.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」環保-人人自備購物袋推廣活動
41.	Tuen Mun	「堅係」自備購物袋-商戶宣傳 *
March 2015		
42.	Eastern	社區減廢暨推廣減少購物袋環保嘉年華

* Event details to be confirmed