

(Translation)

24 December 2015

Mr Anthony Chu
Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Chu,

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 65
Reduction and recycling of food waste

Thank you for your letter dated 15 December 2015. To facilitate the Public Accounts Committee's consideration of the captioned report, we would like to provide information as requested in the ensuing paragraphs.

(a) The reason(s) for not signing the Food Wise Charter

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) agrees with and supports the principles of the Food Wise Charter (the Charter). Although we have not signed the Charter, we have been working to complement the efforts of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) in the promotion of food waste reduction and recycling.

We are unable to sign the Charter mainly because of the difficulty in meeting the requirements in relation to target-setting and auditing for food waste reduction. Our specific considerations of those clauses and the implementation of other clauses are listed below:

| Clauses in the Food Wise Charter | | Action taken by FEHD |
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| Clause 1 | Promoting best practices and behavioural changes to reduce food waste. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ FEHD supports this idea and is happy to participate in EPD's promotional efforts in this respect insofar as resources permit. |
| Clause 2 | Drawing up plans to promote the awareness and acceptance of food waste reduction best practices by stakeholders within our organisations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ We have taken action to assist in drafting Food Waste Reduction Good Practice Guide for the market sector, and offer the Market Management Consultative Committees of public markets as platforms for dissemination and promotion of best practices for food waste reduction among market stall tenants. ✧ We have assisted EPD in distributing leaflets on food waste reduction to fast food vendors in the annual Lunar New Year Fairs to appeal for their support. ✧ We have installed since end-2012 on a trial basis a food waste composter at a public market (i.e. Tai Shing Street Market) for on-site conversion of food waste into compost. |
| Clause 3 | Implementing plans with measurable targets to reduce food waste in our organisations and business settings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ The Charter requires departments to draw up waste reduction plans and monitor the implementation of such plans. FEHD, as the landlord of public markets, is responsible for the management of public markets and, as the licensing authority, is responsible for the issuance of licences to food business premises. FEHD itself is not a food waste producer. It is therefore difficult for FEHD to make a commitment on behalf of the public market tenants or holders of food business licences in the territory to formulate plans with measurable targets and to sign the Charter, which involves target-setting and waste audits. It is also difficult for FEHD to stipulate that market tenants or holders of food business licences must reduce the food waste they generate. FEHD may complement EPD's efforts to encourage their participation. |
| Clause 4 | Encouraging and supporting the management of organisations to conduct in-house waste audits and to use the results of those audits to improve waste management performance. | |

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| Clause 5 | Supporting the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign and similar initiatives to encourage behavioural and cultural changes that engender respects for our precious food and natural resources. | <p>✧ FEHD supports this idea and is happy to participate in EPD's promotional activities in this respect. As one of the members of the Food Wise Hong Kong Steering Committee, we, together with other stakeholders, support and participate in the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign, including its Food Waste Recycling Partnership Scheme. By way of example, to complement the work of EPD, FEHD has offered three markets (namely Tai Kiu Market, North Kwai Chung Market and Po On Road Market) for EPD's contractors to collect food waste for treatment at the Kowloon Bay Pilot Composting Plant in 2015-16. Another three markets will be recommended for carrying out similar trials in 2016-17.</p> |
| Clause 6 | Promoting and adopting recipes that make use of food trimmings. | <p>✧ Holders of food business licences and public market tenants must observe the relevant regulations on food safety and environmental hygiene. In respect of the type of menus or recipes, FEHD may complement EPD's publicity and education efforts to encourage their adoption.</p> |
| Clause7 | Supporting food donation activities whenever possible. | <p>✧ FEHD supports the food trade to sign the Charter and to participate in EPD's efforts in the promotion of food waste reduction, including donation of edible food to charitable organisations following food safety principles. In this connection, Centre for Food Safety under FEHD has issued Food Safety Guidelines for Food Recovery to assist organisations in ensuring food safety while conducting food donation. As food trimmings belong to market tenants and holders of food business licences, it is difficult for FEHD to mandate that they must donate them. FEHD may complement EPD's education and publicity efforts to encourage their participation.</p> <p>✧ In addition, FEHD has assisted to promote related initiatives, such as assisting to implement</p> |

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| | | <p>a pilot scheme on food donation in public markets. FEHD has offered 17 markets for EPD to study the setting up of food collection points. EPD intends to have food collection points set up in six of these markets (namely, Kowloon City Market, San Hui Market, Tung Yick Market, Sha Tin Market, Shek Wui Hui Market and Heung Che Street Market), as the first batch, by suitable non-government organisations identified by EPD. The location plans of these six markets have been furnished to EPD for its consideration. FEHD and EPD are studying the specific arrangements.</p> |
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(b) The measures that FEHD has taken / will take to encourage the reduction of food waste in the public markets under its management

Although unable to sign the Food Wise Charter, FEHD has put in place a series of measures on reduction and recycling of food waste, including:

- (i) Actively participating in EPD's Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign and assisted in drafting Food Waste Reduction Good Practice Guide for the market sector;
- (ii) Installed since end-2012 on a trial basis a food waste composter at a public market (i.e. Tai Shing Street Market) for on-site conversion of food waste into compost;
- (iii) Offering the Market Management Consultative Committees of public markets as platforms for dissemination and promotion of best practices for food waste reduction among market stall tenants;
- (iv) Actively participating in the Food Waste Recycling Partnership Scheme organised by EPD, including nomination of some public markets to participate in the Scheme;
- (v) Assisting EPD in distributing leaflets on food waste reduction to fast food vendors in the annual Lunar New Year Fairs to appeal for support; and
- (vi) Centre for Food Safety under FEHD issued Food Safety Guidelines for Food Recovery to assist organisations in ensuring food safety while conducting food donation.

While resources and expertise permit, FEHD will continue to work in collaboration with EPD and provide support to its food waste reduction initiatives. Measures under consideration include:

- (vii) FEHD plans to set aside some areas in certain public markets for suitable non-government organisations (NGO) identified by EPD to set up food collection points in order to facilitate NGO's collection of food donated by market stall tenants to the needy. FEHD and EPD are studying the specific arrangements; and
 - (viii) EPD is planning source-separated food waste collection from public markets for delivering to and treatment at its Organic Waste Treatment Facility. FEHD and EPD are discussing the source-separated food waste collection arrangements and division of work.
- (c) **Whether consideration would be given by FEHD to implementing surplus food collection and donation programmes in public food markets under its management, such as the programme supported by Link Real Estate Investment Trust in its fresh markets to collect and donate surplus food to the needy**

In addition to implementing the measures on reduction and recycling of food waste, FEHD assists in promoting the development of related issues, such as food donation. As mentioned in item (b) (vii) above, we plan to set aside some areas in certain public markets for suitable NGO identified by EPD to set up food collection points. FEHD and EPD are studying the specific arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



(Sian LY)

for Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

c.c. Secretary for the Environment
Director of Environmental Protection
Secretary for Food and Health
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Director of Audit