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22 February 2016

Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
Central, Hong Kong.
(Attn: Ms. Angel SHEK)

Dear Ms. SHEK,

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Disposal of chemicals into Dasha River of Shenzhen Bay

I refer to your letter dated 5 February 2016 requesting the Administration to respond to the letter by Hon Steven Ho on the same date about the captioned matter.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has in early February raised with the Human Settlements and Environment Commission of Shenzhen Municipality (SZHSEC) reports regarding the trial disposal of chemicals at the mouth of Dasha River in Shenzhen Bay. The SZHSEC advised EPD that the Shenzhen Municipal Water Affairs Bureau, in targeting the problem of black and odourous sediments at the mouth of Dasha River of Shenzhen Bay, had endorsed for a research institute to carry out a trial for in-situ treatment of sediments at the mouth of Dasha River, making use of a composite reagent comprising mainly nitrate supplemented by lime and calcium peroxide. Since the trial was confined to a small area of around 1,000 square metres and seawater has dilution and buffer capacity, and that the composite reagent would be converted into calcium necessary for living organisms as well as other non-toxic substances, the Shenzhen authorities considered that the trial would not have any adverse impact on the water quality of Deep Bay.

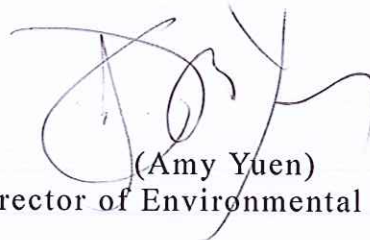
The relevant authorities of Shenzhen have drawn up surveillance and evaluation plans to regularly monitor the quality of the soil and surrounding water. Since residents of both sides were much concerned about the trial, the SZHSEC conducted another on-site sampling at the mouth of Dasha River as well as on both

sides of the river mouth on 4 February 2016. The monitoring results, as compared with the monitoring results obtained at the mouth of Dasha River on 11 December 2015, indicated that dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH, chemical oxygen demand and ammonia-nitrogen were all at normal levels, and there was no abnormality. The SZHSEC will closely monitor changes in water quality to protect the water body.

The use of composite reagent in remediating contaminated sediments has been applied overseas for many years. In Hong Kong, nitrate was used for the treatment of contaminated sediments at the Shing Mun River Channel, Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter and Kai Tak Approach Channel, and was effective in reducing the odour nuisance. Soon after the incident, EPD had arranged for collection of marine water samples from the 5 routine monitoring stations at Deep Bay on 3 February 2016 to monitor changes in water quality. The monitoring results showed that dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH, 5-day biochemical oxygen demand, ammonia-nitrogen and *E. coli* count were all at normal levels, and there was no abnormality. Based on EPD's routine monitoring at Deep Bay on 18 February 2016, the *in-situ* measurements also showed that dissolved oxygen, turbidity and pH levels were at normal levels. EPD will continue to closely monitor for changes in the water quality of Deep Bay. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) also conducted site inspections of the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site on 15 February 2016. No abnormality in the ecology of the Inner Deep Bay wetlands was observed. AFCD will continue to closely monitor the situation of the wetlands and the impact of the incident on the culture environment of the oyster beds and fishing operation at Deep Bay.

The Shenzhen Municipal Water Affairs Bureau meanwhile has indicated that they would jointly investigate with relevant departments of Hong Kong in developing schemes for sediment treatment, if there is a need to do so on a larger scale. EPD will continue to liaise and follow up with the Shenzhen authorities on environmental issues of mutual concern under the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Environmental Co-operation Forum.

Yours sincerely,



(Amy Yuen)

for Director of Environmental Protection

c.c. Ms Becky SL LAM, CEO(CBD)/EPD (Fax 2872 0603)
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