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19 May 2016

Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn. : Ms Sophie Lau)

[Fax no.: 2978 7569]

Dear Ms Lau,

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

**Recruitment of Part-time Bus Captains
by the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited**

Thank you for your letter of 18 March 2016, enclosing with it the comments of Hon Gary Fan on the recruitment of part-time bus captains by the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (“KMB”).

Bus operation is a labour-intensive service industry. Franchised bus companies have to be adequately staffed in order to be able to provide proper and efficient services. The specific details of employment arrangements are determined by individual franchised bus companies having regard to factors such as operational needs and market situation. It is a common practice of all five franchised bus companies in Hong Kong to recruit part-time bus captains to support their operations. This can help meet service needs flexibly (such as to provide more frequent bus service by more manpower on busy days and during peak periods) while managing pressure on bus fares. Given the tight manpower situation of the local transportation sector, the number of newly-recruited full-time and part-time bus captains and their ratio are also constrained by the demand and supply situation of the labour market. For KMB, its total number of bus captains (including both full-time and part-time ones) stood at some 8 900 as at end-2015. This represents an increase of around 11% over a period of five years. Among them, around 87% were full-time bus captains. This percentage

is comparable to the industry's overall situation. The turnover rate of KMB's full-time bus captains (including retirees) was about 13% in 2015. This is again comparable to the industry's overall situation. The improvement in KMB's lost trip rate suggests that more manpower is clearly conducive to the provision of more reliable services by the operator.

According to the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations, all bus captains of franchised buses must pass the driving test of the Transport Department ("TD") and hold a valid driving licence for "Public Bus" or "Public Bus – Franchised" for driving franchised buses. Holders of such driving licences have already met TD's basic driving skills requirements. The franchised bus companies provide various types of training for newly-recruited and serving bus captains based on their respective daily operational needs. Depending on whether the new recruit is a holder of a "Public Bus" or "Public Bus – Franchised" driving licence, the major franchised bus companies will provide driving training to the new recruit for a minimum of 13 to 28 days. Over the last ten years, the duration of the training for newly-recruited bus captains has not been shortened. For KMB, all of its newly-recruited full-time and part-time bus captains must undergo pre-service training which includes on-road training for familiarisation of the new recruit with the routes and bus models concerned as well as training on defensive driving skills. On completion of training, a bus captain must also pass an assessment before he/she can perform duties on the road. Starting from June 2015, KMB has further enhanced its support for the newly-recruited full-time and part-time bus captains. A "buddy" bus captain will provide assistance to the new recruit on board for the whole day on the first working day. Depending on the performance of the new recruit on the first day, the half-day on-board assistance to be provided on the second day and within the seventh to ninth working days may be extended to whole-day assistance as necessary.

To ensure that bus captains have sufficient rest time, TD has promulgated the *Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks* ("the Guidelines") (see [Annex](#)) for franchised bus companies to take into account when arranging duty schedules for full-time and part-time bus captains. To ensure compliance of the Guidelines by franchised bus companies in arranging duty schedules, each franchised bus company has to submit quarterly reports to TD on the implementation of the Guidelines. TD also engages independent contractors to carry out annual surveys on the working hours, rest time and meal break arrangements of bus captains. The reports submitted by KMB and TD's survey findings both indicate that KMB has generally complied with the Guidelines in arranging duty schedules. TD will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Guidelines and take follow-up actions where necessary.

Yours sincerely,

(Louis Leung)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.

Commissioner for Transport (Attn. : Miss Rachel Kwan)

**Guidelines on Bus Captain
Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks
issued by the Transport Department**

(Revised in October 2010)

- Guideline A** – Bus captains should have a rest time¹ of at least 30 minutes after 6 hours of duty and within that 6-hour duty, they should have rest times totalling 20 minutes of which no less than 12 minutes should be within the first 4 hours of duty. The time bus captains spend at a terminal point preparing for the next departure and monitoring boarding of passengers should not be regarded as rest time.
- Guideline B** – Maximum duty (including all rest times) in a working day should not exceed 14 hours.
- Guideline C** – Driving duty (i.e. maximum duty less all rest times each of 30 minutes or more) in a working day should not exceed 11 hours.
- Guideline D** – The break between successive working days should not be less than 10 hours.
- Guideline E** – Bus captains working for a duty of not less than 8 hours in a working day should have a meal break. Bus companies should complete the improvement of meal breaks to no less than 45 minutes by the third quarter of 2011, and further improvement to no less than one hour in one year thereafter.

¹ Meal break is regarded as rest time.