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Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs,
Legislative Council Secretariat,
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

17th May, 2017

Reference: Written submission for Government's proposed implementation arrangements for municipal solid waste charging

Dear Secretariat,

Thank you for your invitation to the Legislative Council Panel on the 29th of May and our organisation gladly submits our policy suggestions before the hearing. Our organisation takes great interest in Hong Kong's waste management and waste reduction policies. On top of established centres at Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve and UNESCO Geopark, we also have a recycling centre in Tai Po near the Railway Museum. There are three areas we would like to give our views on: waste recycling, waste reduction and education.

Waste reduction is paramount to Hong Kong's waste management and environmental policy. One of my colleagues went to Shenzhen recently and examined the ways they incentivise local population to reduce their household waste. The authority first provides every resident an octopus-like card. The card is registered for each household and used in purchasing rubbish bags and for data collection. There are machines allocated around the residential estate for the purchase of bags and discarding waste. Every time a resident discard their household waste in their purchased bin bags, the waste is weighed and data is scored into the system. From this, the system logs and display data for households and policy-makers. After each month, households that have reduced their waste (according to their octopus registration) enter into a prize draw; prizes include free tickets to local concerts, supermarket vouchers and gift cards. The prizes are funded by those bin bags purchased by households. This provides considerable incentives for households to participate as the prize draw is regularly held.

Although it needs investment into machines, not only does this scheme reduce municipal waste, it also educates the younger generation. We believe this system will work well in residential estates, rural villages, university and school campuses, and private complex housing or commercial buildings.

In addition to the waste reduction policy, the government should look to expand recycling centres in all districts in order to extend the lifetime of consumer products. These centres collect recyclable materials from their members and in exchange, provide gifts such as cooking oil and rice. We propose the government should expand our recycling centres by providing more resources in operation and promotion, so the public can receive more understanding on the importance on waste reduction and recycling.

Finally, our organisation hopes the government will continue its effort on conservation education. Our research shows that the longevity of environmental protection can only be sustained if the younger population applies it to their daily lives. We propose that this topic should be added to school's curriculum, and educational institutions should set an example by having proper systems to reduce and recycle consumer wastes.

On the whole, we agree and support the Government's proposed implementation arrangements for municipal solid waste charging, and propose that more support and incentives such as above, are needed to make sure the success of the scheme and the cooperation of the community.

Thank you very much, if there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Henry Yau

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