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[English translation for reference only]

Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms. Doris LO)
[Fax no.: 2840 0269]

Dear Ms. LO,

Thank you for your letter of 24 April enclosing Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG's letter of 20 April to the Chairman of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport ("the Panel") regarding franchised taxis.

We have always been encouraging the taxi trade and vehicle suppliers to introduce wheelchair-accessible taxis to provide more vehicle choices for wheelchair users. As far as we understand, a vehicle manufacturer will introduce a newly developed liquefied petroleum gas vehicle model which is wheelchair-accessible and suitable to be used as taxis in 2018. The present widely-used ordinary taxi model will be phased out. By then, there should be more wheelchair-accessible ordinary taxis for passengers in the market.

With respect to the proposed franchised taxis, we propose that the operator's fleet will be required to comprise at least 50% of wheelchair-accessible taxis. Wheelchair users will not have to pay additional

fares for using these wheelchair-accessible franchised taxis. If a bidder of franchised taxis proposes a percentage of wheelchair-accessible vehicles higher than the requirement, his application will be accorded with higher score under the assessment. In other words, wheelchair users not only have an equal opportunity to use franchised taxis, the Government's policy has also facilitated the franchised taxis to be more convenient for wheelchair users.

The details of the Government's latest proposals on franchised taxis can be found in Government's paper to the Panel (Paper No. CB(4)666/16-17(05)). Members of the Panel provided views on the paper on 21 April. The Government is canvassing and consolidating views from various parties in the community. We will report to the Panel on how to take forward the work on franchised taxis in the Report on the Public Transport Strategy Study Report to be released in June this year.

Yours sincerely,
[signed]
(Peggy NG)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing