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TRANSPORT AND HOUSING BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
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4 October 2017

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

Dear Ms Lo,

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Seating Capacity of Low-floor Light Buses**

Thank you for your letter of 24 August 2017, enclosing the views from Hon Fernando Cheung on the seating capacity of low-floor light buses.

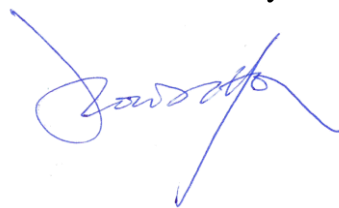
The Government has earlier increased the maximum seating capacity of public light buses (“PLBs”) to 19 seats through legislative amendment. This could enhance the overall carrying capacity of PLBs to meet the passenger demand and reduce passengers' waiting time, in particular during peak periods, without the need to increase the total number of PLBs and increase the burden on road traffic. When studying and deciding on the appropriate maximum seating capacity, we have considered the supply and demand for PLBs and the need to maintain the delicate balance amongst various public transport services.

Meanwhile, the Government has all along been promoting the concept of “Transport for All” and, where practicable, engaging the public transport operators in enhancing their facilities to facilitate the use of various public transport services by the elderly and persons with disabilities. To facilitate barrier-free access by passengers with special needs, the Government will launch a trial scheme for low-floor wheelchair-accessible PLBs. Low-floor PLBs which are suitable for use in Hong Kong will be introduced for trial at three hospital routes, so as to ascertain whether it is feasible and desirable for such light buses to provide services at these routes. To enable low-floor PLBs to better serve

wheelchair users, the Transport Department (“TD”) is working with the PLB operators to consider introducing relevant facilitation measures, including exploring the provision of telephone reservation service and queuing facilities to provide convenience to wheelchair users at PLB stands. However, it should be noted that these models are also subject to the regulation of the maximum seating capacity prescribed by the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374). The existing legal provision does not empower the Commissioner for Transport to have the discretion to exempt the maximum seating capacity. Currently, TD is working with the PLB operators, vehicle manufacturers and domestic agents concerned to follow up on the details for type approval of these low-floor PLB models, including their structure, seating arrangement and safety equipment. TD will complete the vetting procedures as soon as possible.

If the trial scheme is proven effective, the Government will discuss with the trade on the feasibility of further promoting low-floor PLBs. The Government will also study the issue of adjusting the maximum seating capacity for low-floor PLBs by then. The task will be conducted in tandem with the regular survey on the market occupancy rate of light buses to be launched in 2018.

Yours sincerely,



(Dominic Ho)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c. Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Mr Joseph Tsui)