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1 June 2018

Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Mr Lemuel WOO)

[Fax No.: 3151 7052]

Dear Mr Woo,

Bills Committee on Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2018

Follow-up actions arising from the discussion of the meeting on 23 April 2018

Thank you for your letter of 24 April 2018. Regarding the follow-up actions for the meeting on 23 April 2018, our reply is as follows –

The Government proposes to cancel the requirement for updating driver's photograph on taxi and PLB driver identity plates once every 12 months, and to specify a longer validity period for the driver identity plates concerned, in response to the earlier feedback from the taxi and PLB trades. The trades consider it unnecessary to frequently update the photographs as drivers are all adults, so as to facilitate trade operation.

Views from the Trades

When formulating the proposal concerning the appropriate duration of the validity period, we have fully considered the views from the trades. In the course of communicating with the trades in the past, the

trades indicated that the validity period for driver identity plates should be a longer period (i.e. 5 years or above), and reference should be made to the normal validity period of other identification documents.

In fact, when the Transport Department (“TD”) consulted the taxi and PLB trades on the specific proposal in May and December 2017, the trades supported the proposal of specifying ten years as the validity period for driver identity plates. The trades pointed out that drivers were all adults and their appearances would not change significantly in ten years’ time. Also, the trades considered that the validity period for driver identity plates should be aligned with that for important identification documents such as driving licences and passports, i.e. specifying ten years as the validity period.

Materials Selected for Driver Identity Plates after Legislative Amendments

When formulating the proposal of specifying ten years as the validity period for taxi and PLB driver identity plates, we have been aware of the importance of the durability of the driver identity plates, with a view to ensuring that the driver identity plates can effectively perform their functions. In this regard, the TD has reviewed the materials for producing driver identity plates, made reference to the existing specifications of driving licences printed by the Government, and consulted the Government Logistics Department (“GLD”) on the materials to be selected for producing new driver identity plates subsequent to the legislative amendments.

Same as the existing arrangement, the paper for producing taxi and PLB driver identity plates in future will continue to be produced by the GLD, and supplied by the TD to its authorised driver identity plate production agents¹. To enhance the durability of the driver identity plates, we will select 200gsm matt art paper, which is thicker and more durable than the 157gsm matt art paper currently used. As for lamination materials, we will request the driver identity plate production agents to use thermal laminating pouches with thickness of 250micron or above, so as to improve the protection to the driver identity plate paper as well as make the photograph and texts more clearly visible. As regards the ink, we will request the driver identity plate production agents to use appropriate ink for inkjet printers or toner for laser printers, and print the photographs with a quality setting of 1200ppi or above, so as to reduce the chance of fading.

¹ The driver identity plate production agents authorised by the TD include dedicated liquefied petroleum gas refilling stations, taxi and PLB associations, photo processing shops and driving schools.

When vetting the applications for driver identity plate production agents, the TD will request the applicants to provide printing samples of driver identity plates, in order to ensure that the format fulfills the new specification requirements, while the ink and lamination materials used shall also comply with the principle of durability.

Furthermore, as mentioned at the meeting, we will review the production quality of the driver identity plates three years after the implementation of the new driver identity plate specifications. If it is found in the review that the production quality of most of the driver identity plates is unsatisfactory or the problem of fading of the information printed on most of the plates is serious, the Commissioner for Transport may then specify by notice in the Gazette a new design for the taxi driver identity plates and PLB driver identity plates, so as to require the drivers to renew their plates. This will ensure that the information on the driver identity plates is clearly and easily visible, so as to facilitate easy identification of driver's identity and enhance the professional image for meeting our policy objective.

Yours sincerely,



(Dominic Ho)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c. Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Ms Stella Lee)