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Charitable Institution: 91/7376

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Tai Po, Hong Kong

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

18th May, 2018

Submission of Protection of endangered species of animals and plants

Dear Secretariat,

Thank you for your invitation to speak at the Legislative Council on the 28th of May, and our organisation gladly submit our views for your kind consideration on the topic of endangered species of animals and plants, in particular the conservation of green turtle, sharks and incensed trees.

With our centres at Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve, UNESCO Geopark, Lam Tuen Village and Tai Po Recycling Centre, our conservation and education work spans both land and sea, and we are well aware and concerned about the government policy on endangered species. From this, we would like to offer our views and policy recommendations, and hope that the government will take those into careful consideration, taking the first step to improve our policy to protect endangered plants and animals.

Firstly, in regards to the illegal Agilawood/incensed trees (沉香木), we are happy to see that the AFCD and Customs and Excise Department have been working closely to stop the export and import of protected trees and wooden products to/from Hong Kong. However, we are concerned about the level of illegal chopping of Agilawood by locals and foreigners, and some of their illegal acts seems to have gone unpunished. As these people are the source of the supply of these types of wood and gaining substantial profit from these activities, we request that the government to consider new methods to protect these incensed trees. It is the source of supply that needs further assistance and enforcement, as our borders already have sufficient resources and staff to deal with the 'middleman' or merchandisers.

Secondly, sharks fin has continued to dominate the Asian market, even though most consumers are aware of the pain and devastation such consumptions have caused, the demand remain high. Over the years, we appreciate the resources spent on educating the public and discourage them from consuming sharks fin products. To move ahead, we advise the government to take bold steps and introduce a 'sharks fin' tax. Although the idea is premature, the government can introduce a one-off tax for consumers who wish to purchase or consume sharks fin. The extra consumer cost will undoubtedly make people think twice before consuming at restaurants, and more importantly, restaurant operators won't have to bare the extra cost. Such deterrence will only be effective if the taxation is high, and further discussion on the level of taxation is needed. Feasibility studies, pilot schemes, and consultation with catering sectors are also advised.

Finally, I want to discuss the current legal framework protecting endangered plants and animal in Hong Kong. The current legislative and regulatory framework derives from *Cap 170 Wild Animals Protection Ordinance- Schedule 2 Protected Wild Animals*. The list was compiled in 1992 and subsequently renewed again 5 years later, which included all types of birds. However, since 1997, the list has not been updated. Species include many rare and important spiders, butterflies, dragonfly, fireflies, crabs and marine animals are not included in the list, despite the fact that many are endangered and potentially facing extinction. We hope that the government will renew the existing ordinance as soon as possible and update the list every 2 years.

We hope our recommendations are helpful to you, and if there are any questions or wish to discuss further with us, please do not hesitate to contact.

Yours faithfully,

*Henry Yau
Policy Unit Officer*

*Kin Au
Project Officer*

Environmental Association Limited

Our Centres: Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve, Tai Po Geoheritage Centre in UNESCO Geopark, E-wise Discovery Centre, Ways for Plastic Recycling