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Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Sophie LAU)

[Fax no.: 2840 0716]

15 November 2018

Dear Ms LAU,

Panel on Transport
Motions Passed at the Meeting on 25 July 2018

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2018. Regarding the motions passed at the meeting of the Panel on Transport on 25 July 2018, our reply is as follows –

Fare increase applications by the Citybus Limited (Franchise 1) and the New World First Bus Services Limited

In processing the fare increase applications by the Citybus Limited (Franchise for Hong Kong Island and Cross-Harbour Bus Network) (“Citybus (F1)”) and the New World First Bus Services Limited (“NWFB”), the Government will follow the established practice and consider the six relevant factors under the established Fare Adjustment Arrangement for Franchised Buses. These factors include the financial position and prospects of the bus operators, public acceptability and affordability, quality and quantity of the bus service provided, etc. The Government will also take into account the views of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport and the Transport Advisory Committee before making recommendations to the Executive Council.

We understand Members' wish to see franchised bus operators opening up real-time arrival information further. In this regard, the Citybus and the NWFB, just like other franchised bus operators, have been providing passengers with real-time bus arrival information on their regular bus routes through their websites and smartphone applications. They also work with the Transport Department ("TD") in providing the real-time arrival information in the TD's "HKeMobility" smartphone application and website to facilitate users. The Government is actively discussing with the franchised bus operators, with a view to encouraging and promoting the opening up of their data in machine-readable format on the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer's "data.gov.hk" portal in the light of the Government's open data policy, thereby enabling wider use of the relevant data.

Regarding the remuneration packages for bus captains, the wages of bus captains are affected by a host of factors, such as the market and overall economic conditions. The Government has been calling on the franchised bus operators, as responsible enterprises, to maintain effective communication with their staff regarding the remuneration arrangements. We note that the Citybus and the NWFB, in response to the demand of their staff, have improved the wage structure of their frontline staff by increasing the bus captains' basic wages starting from March 2018. Besides, the two bus companies have also reached a consensus with their staff that full-time bus captains would receive a wage increase of 5% or at least \$1,100 in 2018.

As for driving safety, to further enhance the safety of buses, the Citybus and the NWFB upgraded the black box functions of their bus fleet in September 2018 so as to monitor the real-time bus speed and issue immediate speeding alert to the bus captains. Moreover, the two bus companies will install seat belts on all passenger seats of their newly procured buses. All newly procured double-deck buses will also be equipped with Electronic Stability Control, which will help improve the stability of the vehicle and reduce the risk of rollovers, as well as speed limiters with a retarder function, so as to further enhance the safety and reliability of bus services.

Taxi Driver-Offence Points System

The Taxi Driver-Offence Points ("TDOP") System proposed by the Government aims to strengthen the overall deterrent effect, especially on taxi drivers who have repeatedly committed various malpractices related to taxi services, so as to enhance taxi service quality and respond to the requests from the

community and the feedback from the taxi trade. The proposed TDOP System particularly targets the offences of a more serious nature, including overcharging, refusal to hire and not using the most direct practicable route which involve conduct of fraudulent behaviour and have a grave impact on taxi service quality. Under the proposal, when a taxi driver repeatedly commits the relevant offences and when his/her offence points are accumulated to a certain level, the driver will be disqualified from driving a taxi for a certain period of time.

We note Members' suggestion that taxi drivers who have committed serious offences should be disqualified from driving a taxi immediately. As mentioned in the response given by the Secretary for Transport and Housing at the meeting, when reviewing the existing taxi driver-related offences, we should carefully strike a balance so that the penalties will have sufficient deterrent effect and at the same time be set at a reasonable level commensurate with the seriousness of the contraventions. The major considerations include the seriousness and prevalence of the offences at present, the sentences awarded by the court in the past, and the maximum penalties for similar sanctions in other legislation. We will consider the views and concerns of the stakeholders carefully and revise the content of the proposed TDOP System where appropriate.

The Government will continue to maintain close liaison and co-operation with the trade and other stakeholders, and listen to their views in an open manner, in order to formulate appropriate and feasible measures to enhance taxi service quality.

Yours sincerely,

P.P. 
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for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.: Commissioner for Transport (Attn: Mr Patrick WONG)
(Attn: Ms Stella LEE)