

**Legislative Council  
Bills Committee on Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste)  
(Amendment) Bill 2018**

**Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers on  
Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018**

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (the HKIE) believes that the society should step forward to support implementation of the scheme (the Scheme) of charging for municipal solid waste (MSW) in order to promote waste reduction at source and resources saving, as well as for the sustainable development in Hong Kong. We support passing the legislation for the Scheme. We would like to provide our views and suggestions for consideration.

**Scope and Charging Level of the Scheme**

2. The Institution is of the view that all sectors and all types of MSW, including domestic and commercial and industrial (C&I) waste, should be covered in the Scheme to ensure that every sector would share the responsibility to achieve waste reduction. We support launching a pilot phase for a duration of 12 to 18 months to ensure that the circumstances are mature prior to the subsequent full implementation of the Scheme.

3. The HKIE suggests the Administration to work out the details of setting the appropriate charging level, as this will be the critical element to the success of the Scheme. The monetary charge level should be directly related to the quantity of waste disposed of to promote waste reduction and to align with the principle of “Waste Less, Pay Less”. The charge would need to be set at a level that can incentivise the public to reduce waste, while every endeavour should be taken to avoid the charge causing excessive burden to the households, in particular the low-income families.

**Implementation Process**

4. In order to achieve significant waste reduction, we support the “polluter pays” principle and “per-bag trash collection fee” system, which has been successfully implemented in several other countries charging according to the weight or volume of the generated waste, through the use of specific containers, labels or garbage bags. Hence, the Administration’s proposal of setting different charges for garbage bags of various litre(s) and the designated label for oversized waste is supported.

5. It is expected that the proposal for the fee charging on garbage bags would generate an incentive for the public to adopt behavioural change to reduce imprudent consumption and to select products which tend to generate less waste. The system would also help track the volume of waste disposed of by individual households and ensure fairness in implementing quantity-based charging. Waste separation at the source would also be reinforced.

6. It is considered that an overriding management strategy should be devised for the implementation of the Scheme, which would include engaging all stakeholders, consolidating and co-ordinating relevant infrastructures (i.e. treatment facilities, collection systems, and widely distrusted waste collection points), setting up a recycling system, and designing relevant financial incentives.

7. The HKIE agrees to take multiple initiatives to support implementation of the Scheme and make it efficient and effective. On the one hand, promotion and community communication campaigns and educational measures such as training/briefing sessions should be launched to facilitate value change in society and behavioural change in individuals. These initiatives would help encourage waste reduction at the source for households, industries and service sectors, enhance public understanding of the benefits of the Scheme to society, and promote the concept and practice for proper segregation of recyclables and non-recyclables. On the other hand, effective enforcement system should be devised. Administrative guidelines should be formulated to assist the public in devising measures to apportion waste charge among households based on the “Waste Less, Pay Less” principle. Reasonable penalty should be imposed for non-compliance. However, caution should be taken to avoid the Scheme causing unreasonable annoyance to the public.

### **Long-Term Vision for Sustainability of the MSW Waste Charging Scheme**

8. The HKIE believes that the leadership of the Government and its close collaboration with key stakeholders would be imperative. To effectively deal with the crisis of excessive waste, the Scheme would need to be launched alongside relevant measures and actions plans to build up our community to identify with pursuing sustainability. Corresponding considerations would include: -

- Sustainable regulation of the waste reduction at source, and the integration and promotion of recycling processes;
- Proper regulation and development of local recycling and recovery market through integration of green technologies and enhanced incentives, with adequate system for prediction and management of risks and fluctuations so as to create long-term value for the market;
- Driving the waste recovery industry towards a more holistic view assessing all inputs and outputs including potential recyclability, instead of just holding a narrow view based primarily on limited life cycle analyses or measures of carbon emissions;
- Driving for integration and promotion of waste reduction into corporation’s sustainability management system;
- Proper regulation and coordination of long-term public-private partnership to build the capacity of the stakeholders and engage for innovation and research on sustainable, cost-effective advanced technologies integrating recycling content in the manufacturing process;
- Adoption and implementation of the concept of “zero waste” and through the transition to the circular economy to highlight the long-term socio-economic and environment benefits of the waste reduction measures; and

- Setting appropriate legislations and policy instruments to help adapt successful experiences in overseas to be applicable locally and upgrade the capacity/ expertise of stakeholders in Hong Kong to strive for sustainability.

## **Conclusion**

9. As a concluding remark, the HKIE believes that the Scheme should be well integrated and fully implemented with various drivers for resources preservation and sustainability in Hong Kong, while all stakeholders are to be engaged. The basis of the Scheme should reflect and interact with wide ranges of considerations under a larger backdrop encompassing sustainability and urban planning, local and global environmental agendas, governance and strategic plans for resources preservation, urban management system, and all stakeholders' capacity to adopt the behaviour and motives of resources recycling and recovery etc.