

Dear Honorable Legislative Committee Members,

I am a sixteen-year-old student who cares about the state of the world. Though my age may be viewed as a hindrance, I find that my perceived naivety lends itself to an idealism which finds positive change possible – a unique view which I hope is adequately expressed in this plea to the government. With this, I hope the rest of the letter will be read and deliberated with insightful consideration.

I have never written such a letter to LEGCO thus far, but have been emboldened by recent findings from the IPCC report, which finds us facing an imminent climate change catastrophe within the next 12 years. While this does not surprise me, it further validates my depressingly cynical understanding that, without radical interference by governments, my generation's future tainted by struggle and pain.

Thus, I am writing as a young, frustrated student who is disappointed in the government. I do not wish to see it stand passively as the climate reaches the breaking point, especially when it has the money, resources, and influence to generate change.

Therefore, when I was notified that an opportunity has arisen for HK to address this gradual and insidious issue, I felt compelled to show my support.

The impending disaster concerning waste disposal in HK has long been warned by the EPD. Government officials and the public have been aware of the imminent shortage of land for waste disposal. Yet, two years before we run out of space, we are still without a clear, sustainable solution for trash disposal in the future. We are running out of time to tackle this issue, with this proposal having been delayed for too long.

I aggressively and fiercely approve of this bill, finding it comprehensive and detailed. As it was initially pitched in 1995, 23 years of deliberation has been long enough – hence, it must be passed as soon as possible, especially considering the necessary phasing-in period, which will take time.

Past trials in Ming Nga Court have already exhibited the effectiveness of this policy, and the success of similar schemes in Taiwan/Korea/Japan indicates that this method can work for a modern city. Meanwhile, needed provisions for low-income families have been considered, specifically in clause 30, which states that support for the CSSA will increase. Even more telling is the interview from resident Kwok Yin-Lin of Ming Nga Court, who stated “we weren't used to [the fee] at first, but at the end of the day, you start to accept it, and this is good for the Earth”. This indicates the eventual willingness of citizens to agree to this program, and undercuts the government's fear of public backlash to the scheme on a personal level. Moreover, existing surveys from CUHK and HKU indicate that, despite the controversial nature, a majority of residents still believe that the \$35-35 charge, polluter-pays principle, and adopting waste charging is acceptable, having an approval rate of 50, 51.7, and 58.7%.

On the issue of increased government spending, it should not be neglected that the HK government is infamous for its unnecessary prudence. It is nearing 3 trillion in fiscal reserves, and has experienced a record surplus this year. With Paul Chan predicting 5+ years of positive GDP growth, I think the government is **more than capable** of spending money on this program, as evidenced by their willingness to commit 400 million for this project between 2019-2020. It should also be mentioned that, in comparison, 310 million HKD was committed to Ocean Park for tourism purposes. If the government can spend such an amount on Ocean Park, a pressing issue such as waste disposal must be deserving of much more funding. Thus the concerns of residential developers who voice concerns about increased operational costs are easily rectified by rebates, which I believe the government can provide in ample amounts.

Lastly, it is, frankly, an embarrassment for the HK government if it cannot handle the measly issue of waste disposal, and instead, enable the status quo to run until eventual depletion of the land available for landfills. In that worst-case, we will be ranked amongst the likes of Lebanon, whose waste management is disastrous because of the strain from refugees and a lack of money. In comparison, HK's waste disposal would be disastrous only because of the incompetency of LEGCO and the government to pass a policy bill. For a government burdened with existing dissent from pro-democracy supporters and suffering from a low in popularity polls, the mere task of waste management must be sorted.

Thus, by limiting our consumerist tendencies, this policy needs to be passed for the Government's standing, for the sustenance of Hong Kong, and for my generation's future. I am deeply concerned about this issue, and can only hope that members will consider my plea for the implementation of this policy.

Regards,
Jane Chan (RCHK)