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GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
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Ms Sophie LAU
Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

24 May 2019

Dear Ms LAU,

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Motions passed at the meeting on 26 April 2019**

Thank you for your letter dated 29 April 2019. Regarding the two motions passed at the meeting of the Panel on Transport (“Panel”) held on 26 April 2019, our consolidated reply is as follows:

Fare increase applications for taxi

The Government is processing the fare increase applications submitted by the urban, New Territories and Lantau taxi trade. The Government’s established policy is to consider taxi fare increase applications in accordance with the following major criteria -

- (a) the need to ensure the financial viability of taxi operations, taking into consideration changes in revenue and operating costs;
- (b) the need to maintain an acceptable level of taxi service in terms of vehicle availability, passenger waiting time and passengers’ feedback on service;
- (c) the need to maintain a reasonable differential between taxi fares and those of other public transport modes;
- (d) public acceptability of the proposed fares; and

- (e) taxi fare structure should be “front-loaded” and thereafter on a varying descending scale for incremental charges.

We note the different views raised by Members of the Panel on taxi fare increase applications at the meeting held on 15 March 2019 and will take into account the views of the Transport Advisory Committee before submitting to the Chief Executive in Council for approval. The taxi fare adjustment is subject to the amendment of the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) Regulations and the negative vetting procedure of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”).

Adjustment of taxi rental

As we mentioned in the discussion paper, taxi rental has been a commercial arrangement between owners and drivers in free market. The rental changes according to the supply and demand in the market. The rental level of individual vehicles will also be affected by factors including vehicle models, age and maintenance, etc.

We understand that Members and the public are concerned about whether taxi owners will increase taxi rental after the approval of fare increase applications, thereby making it impossible for rentee-drivers to reap actual benefits. The Transport Department (“TD”) has expressed its concern to the trade, and is given to understand that if the fares are adjusted, vehicle owners will normally observe the changes in business and revenue after the fare adjustment, before discussing with driver groups on the rental adjustment having regard to the actual situation. However, as regards the present fare increase applications, the majority of the trading companies and owner associations (29 associations altogether) have indicated to the TD and the LegCo that they will not adjust the rental for about three to six months after the fare increase, and they will later on decide whether or not to adjust the rental having regard to the circumstances. The letter from the taxi trade to the Panel is enclosed at **Annex** (only available in Chinese) for Members’ reference. In fact, in the light of driver shortage, taxi rental has generally stayed the same since the last fare increase in April 2017.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the taxi rental level after the fare increase, including collecting the latest information on taxi rental market through various channels. The TD will also maintain close communication with the trade, through its taxi trade conferences, to keep track of the latest taxi rental situation.

Enhancing taxi service quality

The Government has been striving to enhance the service quality and operating environment of taxis, so as to better meet the needs of the public and facilitate long-term healthy development of the taxi trade. Through the Committee on Taxi Service Quality (“CTSQ”), the TD takes forward various strategies and measures to drive changes to enhance the service quality of existing taxis, including publishing and updating the “Hong Kong Taxi Service Standard” and “Hong Kong Taxi Service Guidelines”, which set out the conduct and performance expected of taxi drivers. The TD also launched a series of online training courses for in-service taxi drivers, and an enhanced “Taxi Driver Commendation Scheme” to recognise taxi drivers with outstanding service quality so as to enhance the professional image of taxi drivers. Meanwhile, the TD has enhanced its mechanism for handling complaints relating to taxi service, with a view to taking actions against drivers who are the subjects of repeated complaints and assisting the taxi trade in setting up a system for self-monitoring and regulation. The TD and the CTSQ have also encouraged the trade to leverage on technology to enhance the operational efficiency and service quality, such as setting up or integrating the taxi hailing application platforms.

Furthermore, in response to the requests from the community and the feedback from the taxi trade, the Government has reviewed the existing sanctions against taxi malpractices and plans to introduce legislative amendments into the LegCo to raise the penalty levels for various taxi drivers’ malpractices in 2019, including (i) the introduction of a two-tier penalty system for taxi driver-related offences of a more serious nature (including overcharging, refusal to hire, not using the most direct practicable route, soliciting, and defacing, damaging or altering of taximeters) such that heavier maximum penalties will be imposed on repeat offenders; (ii) the introduction of a Taxi Driver-Offence Points System such that taxi driver who has repeatedly committed various taxi driver-related offences will be subject to disqualification from driving taxis for a certain period of time; and (iii) updating some of the existing taxi driver-related offence provisions to ensure that they reflect and suit the present circumstances.

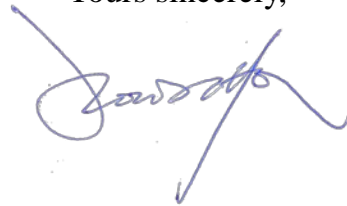
The TD will continue to maintain close communication with the taxi trade and other stakeholders to enhance taxi service quality in concerted efforts.

Waiting time at liquefied petroleum gas (“LPG”) filling stations

At present, there is a total of 69 LPG filling stations in Hong Kong, of which 12 are dedicated LPG filling stations. Regarding the long waiting time of

taxi drivers at filling stations, the TD has referred the case to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department for follow-up actions, including opening up the filling nozzles at dedicated LPG filling stations as far as possible or increasing the frequency of LPG road tanker deliveries to dedicated LPG filling stations with a view to minimising the queuing time for taxis and other LPG vehicles.

Yours sincerely,



(Dominic HO)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.: Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Mr Patrick NG)

全港的士工商團體

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呈 : 立法會交通事務委員會委員秘書處

香港路少車多，過去十年車輛數目持續增加，當中私家車每年約為 4% 的增長，導致道路越來越擠塞；加上，鐵路網絡不斷擴張，的士載客量持續下降，2018 年的士的載客量已跌破 90 萬。的士業的經營環境收窄，加劇司機的流失及難以吸引新血入行。

雖說的士司機的收入是多勞多得，但亦取決於的士之收費水平。過去十年，的士收費之累積加幅只有 24%，但累積通脹則達 35%，顯而，的士收費是滯後，現時的士司機的平均收入較陸路運輸業司機收入的中位數低 18%。但要補充的是，的士司機普遍為自僱人士，由於沒有受僱人士之保障及福利，導致的士司機的薪酬較受僱之陸路運輸業司機還要再低 20%，可見的士司機的薪酬是欠缺競爭力。

現時已有超過一成之的士因沒有司機而閒置，而在職司機又漸趨老年化，根據運輸署的資料，現時有一半之的士司機是 60 歲以上，若沒有新血入行，業界青黃不接的問題只會愈趨嚴峻，的士服務亦將會受影響。為紓緩的士司機不足及老年化的問題，的士業界團體於 2018 年 9 月中遞交加價申請，希望藉增加司機的收入，吸引新血入行。

雖然近年的士業的經營成本亦不斷飆升，例如的士新車車價由年初 265,000 元升到現時 329,000 元升幅 24% 左右，保險費及維修費等各項都有很大的增幅，但為挽留司機，車主會視乎市場環境及司機在收費調整後的收入是否有所增加，才會考慮酌量增加車租，一般都要需時三個月甚至半年，我們絕不會貿然增加車租。

我們承認的士服務還有改善空間，香港的士業議會在熊永達教授帶領下，勵精圖治，努力不懈地改善的士服務質素，我們各會都與運輸署合作宣傳的士服務改善課程，供司機網上學習，E-TAXI APP 即將推出，方便乘客與司機配對，並繼續推廣的士司機禮貌運動及安全駕駛意識，新車雖然昂貴，但業界會陸續更換新車，使乘客有舒適旅程。

崙函奉達 並頌
祺安

全港的士工商團體(排名不分先後)

香港的士商會	主席黃保強
九龍的士車主聯會	主席任太平
聯友的士同業聯會	主席歐陽根
的士同業聯會	主席陳吉祥
港九電召的士車主聯會	羅雪芬
惠益港九及新界的士車主聯會	李國英
的士權益(四海)電召中心	主席陳劍峰
新界四海合眾的士聯會	主席陳劍峰
的士權益協會	主席劉劍魂
數碼的士電召中心	主席劉劍魂
利萊的士台	主席劉劍魂
城市的士車主司機聯會	主席莊永德
的士司機從業員總會	主席黃一峰
自由的士權益協進會	主席李林昌
衛星的士電召服務中心	主席李子良
友聯的士車主聯誼會	主席梁棟榮
西貢的士工商聯誼會	主席李少彬
新星的士同業聯會	主席馬佩淇
新界的士營運協會	主席陳樹生
香港的士小巴商總會	主席周國強
順安車行	董事周國強
推動的士發展聯會	主席陳民強
香港的士電召中心	主席陳 洲
香港計程車會	主席黎海平
偉發的士車主聯會	主席唐子濤
車馬樂的士聯會	主席黃長明
新界的士車主司機同業總會	主席趙鴻娟
泰和車行	董事伍海山
新金豐來車行	董事鄺文森

謹上

二零一九年四月十二日

副本致送：運輸及房屋局局長陳帆太平紳士
運輸署署長陳美寶太平紳士