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31 July 2020

Ms Angel Shek
Secretary
Panel on Environmental Affairs
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Shek,

Panel on Environmental Affairs

**Creation of One Permanent Directorate Post (Chief Building Services Engineer)
to Oversee District Cooling System Projects**

At the meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 22 January 2020, Members requested the Government to provide supplementary information on the above proposal. The responses from the Environment Bureau (ENB) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) are as follows:

Number of Posts in the Energy Efficiency Office (EEO) of EMSD

EEO comprises two divisions at present. The Energy Efficiency Division A (EEDA) consists of one directorate civil servant and 50 non-directorate civil servants. The Energy Efficiency Division B (EEDB) is composed of one directorate civil servant and 71 non-directorate civil servants. The entire EEO is made up of 123 civil servants, 111 of whom are responsible for matters relating to energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy under ENB, with the remaining responsible for matters under other policy bureaux.

Distribution of Staff after the Re-organisation

If the above proposal is approved, EMSD plans to take this opportunity to re-organise the structure of EEO. The re-organised EEO will comprise three divisions: EEDA will comprise one directorate civil servant and 46 non-directorate civil servants; EEDB one directorate civil servant and 53 non-directorate ones; and a new Energy Efficiency Division C with one directorate civil servant and 42 non-directorate ones. The entire EEO will consist of 144 civil servants, 132 of whom are responsible for matters relating to energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy under ENB, with the rest responsible for matters under other policy bureaux.

Operating and Maintenance Costs of District Cooling Systems (DCSs) in New Development Areas (NDAs) and Applicable Adjustment Factors

The operating and maintenance costs of DCSs in NDAs will vary subject to factors such as cooling capacity, design, location and estimated utilisation, etc. EMSD will conduct detailed financial studies on DCSs in NDAs, including operating and maintenance costs, and set the charges at a competitive level. The charges will be levied and handled following the mechanism under the District Cooling Services Ordinance (Cap. 624).

The Government's target is to recover the capital and operating costs over the project life (estimated to be 30 years)¹. Take the DCS currently constructed in phases at the Kai Tak Development (KTD) as an example, EMSD estimates that starting from 2026-27, the charges and fees received by the DCS at KTD would be sufficient to cover the operating and maintenance costs as well as electricity charge.

Measures to reduce energy intensity and carbon intensity and outcome

Members requested the Government to provide information to illustrate the outcome as a result of the resources committed by the Government on energy saving and reduction of carbon emissions.

¹ As provided in the District Cooling Services Ordinance, charges and fees received for the provision of district cooling services are used to recover the capital costs and to settle the operating and maintenance fees for a DCS operator as well as utility costs for operating the DCS plants.

The “Energy Saving Plan for Hong Kong’s Built Environment 2015~2025+” issued by the Government sets a target of reducing the energy intensity of Hong Kong by 40% by 2025, with 2005 as the base year. By 2018, Hong Kong’s energy intensity had reduced by over 30% and was on track towards the goal. The significant decrease in Hong Kong’s energy intensity reflects the achievements in enhanced energy efficiency. We estimate that the energy saving initiatives spearheaded by EEO (including enhancing the statutory energy efficiency level of buildings, encouraging the use of energy efficient electrical appliances, and implementing various initiatives in government buildings and infrastructure) would bring about electricity saving of about 2.5 billion kWh a year.

Energy saving and enhanced energy efficiency will also help reduce carbon emissions. The Government promulgated the “Hong Kong’s Climate Action Plan 2030+” in 2017 which sets a target to reduce Hong Kong’s carbon intensity by 65% to 70% in 2030 (compared to the 2005 level), equivalent to a reduction of 26% to 36% of the total carbon emission.

Hong Kong’s total carbon emission peaked in 2014 and is showing a downward trend. The carbon intensity of Hong Kong has dropped by about 36% from 2005 to 2018. The Government will seek deeper decarbonisation through strategies such as energy saving and higher energy efficiency.

Yours sincerely,



(Cheng Suen Lok)
for Secretary for the Environment

c.c.: Director of Electrical and Engineering Services (Attn.: Mr Chu Kei-ming)