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By email (ssylau@legco.gov.hk)

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

15 April 2020

Dear Ms LAU,

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Meeting on 20 December 2019
Follow-up items relating to safety of franchised buses**

Regarding follow-up items relating to safety of franchised buses (“FBs”) raised by Members at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport held on 20 December 2019, our reply is as follows.

At present, the vast majority of FBs operating in Hong Kong are designed by European bus manufacturers and are in compliance with the relevant internationally recognised structural safety standards for vehicle bodies. Like the buses used in other regions (e.g. the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Singapore), the bodies of the buses running in Hong Kong are generally made of steel and aluminium alloy, and other materials of vehicle bodies (including glass on vehicle bodies, fibre glass, plastic panels, seat cushions, etc.) are also in compliance with various relevant internationally recognised standards (e.g. the glass shall pass the relevant impact and fragmentation tests and the materials on board shall meet the relevant fire resistance standard, etc.).

In addition to compliance with the relevant international standards, the Transport Department (“TD”) will also discuss with bus operators the drawing up of technical specifications for buses and the retrofitting of various bus safety devices having regard to the operational circumstances and experience of FBs in Hong Kong, with a view to further enhancing the operational safety of FBs and providing more protection to passengers. For instance, bus operators:

- (a) have added protective horizontal bars on doors opening outwards on all buses to prevent door glass from being accidentally crashed since mid-2017;
- (b) have installed all newly procured buses with electronic stability control system and speed limiters with retardation function, and have all their seats installed with seat belts since July 2018; and
- (c) further enhanced the technical specifications for FBs, adopted the rectangular step design and installed a real-time speeding alert device on all buses in end-2019.

In view of the public concern about the structural safety of bus bodies, TD is exploring with major bus manufacturers and FB operators ways to further improve bus structure. In the light of Hong Kong’s special circumstances, major bus manufacturers will embark on impact analysis by computer simulation to assess the strength and integrity of existing FBs structure, and explore possible structural enhancement measures accordingly.

According to the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374), all new models of buses, like any other vehicles, have to undergo a two-phased vehicle examination (i.e. the type approval and the pre-registration examination) before they can run on the road. When conducting the type approval, TD will ensure that the design of buses complies with the relevant statutory requirements (including the compartment requirements such as the standards for passages and seats, the escape facility requirements such as emergency exits, and the loading requirements such as the number of seats and standees allowed, etc.) and the relevant internationally recognised standards. TD will also check a bus against its design plan to ensure that the actual specification of the bus matches the plan, and conduct a stability test on the bus to ensure that the bus will not overturn if the surface on which it stands is tilted to either side to an angle of 28 degrees from the horizontal with a full complement of

passengers on the upper deck. After passing the type approval, each new bus also has to undergo the pre-registration examination. TD will check all the devices (e.g. braking system, steering system, safety belts, etc.) on the bus and ensure that their manufacturing specifications are consistent with the approved designs and the vehicle is suitable to run on the road before it can be put into operation. TD will, in collaboration with FB operators and bus manufacturers, continue to explore the tests which suit the local operational requirements with a view to further enhancing vehicle safety as far as practicable.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'N' followed by a loop and a dot.

(Nick CHOI)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.: Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Mr Keke LEUNG)