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Ms Sophie LAU
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(Email address: ssylau@legco.gov.hk)

12 May 2022

Dear Ms LAU,

**Letter from Hon YIM Kong to the Chairman of the Panel on Transport
regarding epidemic control measures for
cross-boundary transport**

Thank you for your letter dated 3 May 2022 to the Secretary for Transport and Housing (STH), conveying the letter from Hon YIM Kong to the Chairman of the Panel on Transport regarding the epidemic control measures for cross-boundary transport. Our reply is as follows:

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government fully understands the difficulties faced by the cross-boundary goods vehicle (CBGV) drivers working under the persistent epidemic situation and the relevant anti-epidemic measures taken in both Guangdong and Hong Kong. As such, the Task Force on Supplies from the Mainland led by the STH has been working closely with the Mainland Government to explore various measures to support the CBGV trade, so as to enhance the capacity of Hong Kong's cross-boundary transport and ensure its stability with a view to striking a balance between the need to fight the epidemic and the stability of cross-boundary transport in both places.

Many Hong Kong CBGV drivers have been temporarily removed from the exemption list by the Guangdong Provincial Government because of confirmed cases found in the buildings or housing estates where they live. In

response to requests made by Hong Kong, the Mainland authorities shortened the duration of their removal from the exemption list to 14 days with effect from 16 February, and narrowed the scope of removal from the exemption list from previously applicable to drivers living in at-risk areas to those living in buildings with confirmed cases. Moreover, CBGV drivers transporting fresh food with a negative nucleic acid test result in the Mainland can be exempted even if they live in buildings with confirmed cases. To reduce the risk of epidemic transmission in the Mainland caused by CBGV drivers, the Transport Department (TD) has arranged for dedicated staff to conduct rapid antigen tests for CBGV drivers at various land boundary control points (BCPs) from 28 February onwards. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. In order to further improve the accuracy of the tests, the TD has already switched to use rapid nucleic acid tests at the BCPs. Starting from 21 April, the sampling method for rapid nucleic acid tests has been further changed to nasopharyngeal swabs.

In addition, given that the daily operation and livelihood of CBGV drivers have been affected under the fifth wave of the epidemic, the HKSAR Government provides a one-off non-accountable subsidy of \$10,000 to each registered CBGV driver under the sixth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund, so as to help them cope with the operating pressure arising from the current epidemic.

As the epidemic situation has stabilised recently, the HKSAR Government will continue to actively explore with the Mainland authorities improvement measures for the existing cross-boundary land transport arrangements, with the aim of reducing the risk of epidemic transmission in both places while ensuring smooth cross-boundary land transport, so as to enhance the flow and efficiency of CBGVs in both Guangdong and Hong Kong to meet the demand for a stable goods supply to Hong Kong via land transport.

Meanwhile, to better cater to the need for cross-boundary transport, in addition to land transport, water transport services have been substantially increased and railway transport services have also been launched. The HKSAR Government will continue to follow up with the Mainland counterparts on arrangements to further enhance the capacity of the "Sea Express" water transport service from the Mainland to Hong Kong so as to improve the efficiency of water transport.

The HKSAR Government will continue to work closely with the Mainland authorities and maintain liaison with the CBGV trade to reflect the views of the trade to the Mainland authorities in a timely manner and actively improve the cross-boundary transport arrangements, thereby facilitating and implementing various measures to support the cross-boundary transport between Guangdong and Hong Kong and ensuring a stable goods supply to Hong Kong.

Thank you for your concern about the captioned matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Eugene Wan', written in dark ink.

(Eugene WAN)
for the Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.: Hon YICK Chi-ming, Frankie, S.B.S., J.P., Chairman of the Panel on
Transport