Letterhead of Environment and Food Bureau Government Secretariat

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7 April, 2000

Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn. Miss Betty Ma)
(Fax No.:2509 9055)

Dear Miss Ma,

Managing Construction and Demolition Material Disposal

At the Environmental Affairs Panel meeting on 2 March 2000, the Hon. Emily Lau asked the Administration to provide information on the amount of waste reduced in past years and an estimate on the amount of construction and demolition (C&D) waste that could be further reduced.

The Administration does not have detailed historical figures on the amount of C&D waste reduced in public works contracts. However, measures including on-site sorting for demolition works, promoting greater use of public filling in reclamations, prohibiting the use of timber for hoardings, promoting the use of pre-cast concrete products and where practicable using steel instead of timber for concrete formworks have all contributed to C&D waste reduction. Information from the Housing Department shows that significant C&D waste reduction has been achieved through measures to reduce the use of timber. This includes saving 783,300 tonnes by using large panel formwork for all domestic blocks since 1985; 50,000 tonnes by the use of metal moulds for precast concrete facades since 1991; and 4,900 tonnes by using metal moulds for precast staircases since 1989.

The percentage of C&D material diverted from landfills and reused as public fill in reclamations has varied from 23% (1991), 40% (1994) to 79% (1999). The rising percentage in recent years was mainly due to efforts to maintain adequate public filling

outlets and by providing sufficient, conveniently located public filling barging points. The historical data for C&D material generation and reuse of public fill is attached.

Whilst it is difficult to forecast the future statistics accurately, we expect the trends to continue as Works Departments and Housing Department continue with the existing waste reduction measures. Other measures that are being considered include advancing planned reclamations to secure adequate public filling capacity, providing long-term barging points and C&D material sorting facilities close to the source of material production, implementing landfill charges, greater choice in the quality of fitments in public housing units, reviewing the building regulations and construction practices for C&D waste reduction opportunities in the private sector, and amending specifications for various materials to allow the inclusion of recycled material.

Despite the economic slow down since late 1997, the amount of C&D material produced by the construction industry increased annually by about 13% in 1998 and 1999. By 2006, we expect that about 35,000 tonnes of C&D material will be produced each day. The Waste Reduction Committee Task Force for the Construction Industry recommended that about 85% of the C&D material produced should be diverted from landfills by 2006. The remaining 15%, mainly decomposable C&D waste, would be disposed at the landfills.

Yours sincerely,

(Steve Barclay)
For Secretary for the Environment and Food

Enclosure: historical data on C&D material produced and reused

cc.		Fax
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Historical Data for
Construction and Demolition Material Generation and Reuse as Public Fill

Year	Annual Quantity of Construction and Demolition Produced (Million cubic metres)[1]	Annual Quantity of Construction and Demolition Reused at Public Fill in Reclamations (Million cubic metres)[1]	Percentage of Reuse[2]
1991	4.27	0.99	23%
1992	5.04	2.66	53%
1993	4.50	2.28	51%
1994	4.79	1.90	40%
1995	6.50	3.84	59%
1996	6.12	4.70	77%
1997	5.78	4.45	77%
1998	6.58	5.20	79%
1999	7.52	5.90	79%

Notes:

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 0.01 million cubic metres.
[2] Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.