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**Municipal Solid Waste Charging - Invitation for Submissions by the
Legislative Council to the Bills Committee Formed on 16 October 2020
to Study the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste)
(Amendment) Bill 2018**

PURPOSE

This paper:

- (a) informs Members of the latest position of the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 (the Bill) as well as various waste reduction and recycling initiatives launched and planned by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) since mid-2020; and
- (b) invites Members to consider whether to respond to the invitation for submissions by the Legislative Council to the Bills Committee formed on 16 October 2020 to study the Bill.

BACKGROUND

2. The Government introduced the Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 14 November 2018 to establish a charging scheme for the disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) in order to drive behavioural changes to reduce waste and contribute to carbon emission reduction. The LegCo Brief on the Bill submitted in November 2018, which sets out the policy intent, proposed charging framework, implementation strategy and the content of the Bill, is at **Annex A**.

3. As mentioned in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address delivered on 25 November 2020, waste reduction was a global trend and was conducive to mitigating climate change. MSW charging, as the main driving force behind waste reduction, will not only drive enterprises and the public to practise waste reduction

and recycling, but also facilitate the sustainable development of related industries and the creation of green job opportunities when the quality and quantity of recyclables collected is enhanced. The Chief Executive expressed her hope in the Policy Address that the Bill, which was introduced into LegCo in November 2018, could be passed as early as possible.

4. MSW charging is also featured as one of the major policy measures to drive waste reduction in the *Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035* announced on 8 February 2021, which outlines the strategies, goals and measures to tackle the challenge of waste management up to 2035. The Government will work with the industry and the community to move towards two main goals. The medium-term goal is to gradually reduce the per capita MSW disposal rate by 40 to 45% and raise the recovery rate to about 55% by implementing MSW charging, while the long-term goal is to move away from the reliance on landfills for direct waste disposal by developing adequate waste-to-energy facilities.

LATEST POSITION OF THE BILL

5. Before the Bill was introduced into LegCo, the Secretary for the Environment briefed the ACE on the Bill, together with other 2018 Policy Address initiatives, at ACE meeting on 5 November 2018. Members had a thorough discussion on the Bill and passed the resolution at **Annex B** in support of it.

6. The Bills Committee of LegCo was subsequently formed to study the Bill and 16 meetings with the Administration had been held, including one meeting to receive views from deputations, 11 to study the general merits and principles of the Bill, three to conduct clause-by-clause examination of the Bill and one to discuss the way forward of the Bills Committee. In June 2020, considering that the sixth-term LegCo would end in July 2020 and having regard to the progress of scrutinizing the Bill, the Bills Committee decided to discontinue its scrutiny work on the Bill.

7. On 31 July 2020, in view of the severe COVID-19 pandemic situation, the Government announced the postponement of the general election for the seventh-term LegCo for a year. Having regard to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress's decision on 11 August 2020 that the sixth-term LegCo would continue to discharge its duties for no less than one year until the commencement of the seventh-term LegCo, a new Bills Committee was formed on 16 October 2020 to study the Bill. As of mid-February 2021, three meetings have been held, with the first two discussing procedural matters and the approach for scrutinizing the Bill. The fourth meeting is scheduled for 25 February 2021.

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES LAUNCHED BY THE EPD SINCE JUNE 2020 AND THEIR PROGRESS

8. To complement and prepare for the implementation of MSW charging, the EPD has launched and planned a number of waste reduction and recycling complementary measures. An information note on waste reduction and recycling complementary measures launched by the EPD since June 2020 and their progress submitted to the new Bills Committee in November 2020 is at **Annex C**.

INVITATION FOR SUBMISSIONS BY THE NEW BILLS COMMITTEE

9. The new Bills Committee decided at its third meeting held on 27 January 2021 that the scrutiny work of the Bill would start afresh from studying the policy aspects and it would invite written submissions from the public on the Bill. The LegCo Secretariat will invite the Administration to prepare written responses to the submissions in due course.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to note the latest position of the Bill and give views on the waste reduction and recycling initiatives reported above. Members are also invited to consider whether to respond to the invitation for written submissions by the new Bills Committee.

Environmental Protection Department
March 2021