

Advisory Council on the Environment
Waste Management Subcommittee
Notes of the Eighth Meeting
Held on 6 April 2006 at 2:30 pm

Present

Professor Poon Chi-sun	(Chairman)
Mr. James R. Graham	
Professor Ho Kin-chung	
Dr. Ng Cho-nam	
Mrs. Ng Fong Siu-mei	
Ms. Iris Tam	
Mr. Tsang Kam-lam	
Professor Wong Tze-wai	
Mr. Raymond Fan	Deputy Director of Environmental Protection
Mr. Tang Kin-fai	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection
Dr. Lawrence Wong	Principal Environmental Protection Officer, EPD
Mr. Patrick Lei	Principal Environmental Protection Officer, EPD
Dr. Cherie Lee	Environmental Protection Officer, EPD
Mr. Te Chi-wang	(Secretary)

Absent with apologies

Professor Howard Huang

Action

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the seventh meeting held on 20 February 2006 were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Territory-wide Source Separation of Domestic Waste

2. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Dr. Lawrence Wong said that there was an existing taskforce to coordinate the source separation programme for public housing estates. Mr. Raymond Fan added that the Administration would review the need of

other arrangements should across-the-board issues arise.

Funding for Recycling Technology Projects

3. The Chairman suggested that the Subcommittee should write to the vetting committee members of the Innovation and Technology Fund and SME Funding Schemes to convey to them the seriousness and imminence of our waste problem and appeal to them for their support on projects on waste management. A Member added that the letter should also be addressed to the committee members of the Environment and Conservation Fund, the Sustainable Development Fund and the Quality Education Fund.

Secretary

Packaging of Moon Cake

4. A Member suggested that in addition to appeal to the moon cake manufacturers, the Subcommittee should also write to major trade associations to encourage their members to purchase moon cake and other corporate gifts with appropriate packaging. She believed that manufacturers would respond better to the market force of the buyers.

Secretary

Agenda Item 3: Proposed Legislation for Implementation of Producer Responsibility Schemes (ACE Paper 6/2006)

5. Mr. K F Tang introduced the paper and highlighted the Administration's commitment to deliver this key policy initiative in the "Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)" (Policy Framework). Mr. Fan added that the umbrella legislation approach was almost universally adopted in overseas PRS legislation, and such approach would help us deliver individual PRS's according to the proposed timetable in the Policy Framework. Noting that the paper would be tabled for discussion at the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs meeting in late April, he appealed for the support of the Subcommittee.

6. A Member supported the proposed legislation, but would like to know whether the Administration would regulate other products in addition to the six products proposed. Mr. Fan said that the proposed legislation would not bind the Administration's hands on

what to regulate in the future. The Administration would listen to the views of the community.

7. A Member supported the proposed legislation, and noted that the success of producer responsibility schemes depended not only on producers, but also consumers. Noting that only a few manufacturers remained in Hong Kong, Mr. Tang said that our producer responsibility schemes would take into account Hong Kong's unique situation. He added that the proposed legislation would be called "Product" Eco-responsibility Bill to denote its more embracing nature.

8. A Member said that producer responsibility schemes should tie in with the EcoPark and landfill bans. While fully supporting PRS's, he emphasized that a level playing field should be maintained, and businesses should be allowed sufficient time to adjust.

9. A Member asked whether the mandatory levies, fees and taxes under PRS's should go into a dedicated fund, instead of the general revenue. Two Members said that the establishment of a dedicated fund might unnecessarily restrict the funding for recycling programmes to the amount actually collected. Another Member also opposed setting up a dedicated fund, noting the difficulties in aligning the objective and the eventual deployment of the fund. Mr. Fan added that even without a dedicated fund, the Administration could still undertake to use the revenue collected under PRS's for green causes.

10. The Chairman and a Member were of the view that the recycling programmes under PRS's should be left to the private sector where possible. A Member shared the UK's experience of implementing PRS's that generated handsome profits for the recycling industry. Mr. Fan said that the provision on establishing industry "organization" would facilitate such practice.

11. The Chairman concluded that the Subcommittee

supported the proposed legislation and the umbrella legislative approach. The Subcommittee was of the view that the proposed legislation should be accorded a high priority given the imminence of our waste problem.

Agenda Item 4: Programme on Source Separation of Domestic Waste and Government's Funding Support

12. Dr. Wong introduced the paper, and sought members' views on whether the subsidy level for purchasing recycling facilities should be raised. Members generally agreed that the subsidy level should be raised to 50%. A Member added that the Administration should explore more efficient ways to roll out the programme. While agreeing that the hardware was important, the Chairman said that public participation was equally crucial.

13. The Chairman asked how singleton residential buildings and village houses in the rural area were tackled under the programme. Dr. Wong said that for singleton buildings, they had worked with NGO's, waste collectors and recyclers to set up community-based collection on a trial basis. As for village houses, more support could be provided for waste collection, complemented by the 3-coloured waste separation bins system.

Agenda Item 5: Progress of Key Initiatives in the Policy Framework (Paper WSC 4/06)

14. Members noted the progress made for the key initiatives in the Policy Framework. The Chairman said that a report on the trip to Germany and the Netherlands would be tabled to be ACE shortly. A Member said that we needed a 10-year plan for public education and engagement. Mr. Fan said that public education and engagement was the foundation of all the key initiatives, and the Administration had put in tremendous efforts in this regard. The Chairman suggested that the progress report could include information on "public education and engagement" for members' reference. Secretary

Agenda Item 6: Waste Subcommittee Annual Report 2005

15. The Subcommittee endorsed the Annual Report.

Agenda Item 7: Any other business

16. With the publication of Policy Framework, Members decided to change the name of the Subcommittee to the “Waste Management Subcommittee” to better reflect its role.

Agenda Item 8: Date of next meeting

17. The next meeting would be scheduled in due course. A Member suggested inviting FEHD’s representative to brief the Secretary Subcommittee on the current waste collection practice.

ACE Waste Subcommittee Secretariat
April 2006