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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2023-24

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Environment and Ecology
Session No. : 11

Controlling Officer: Director of Environmental Protection
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Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-EEB(E)001	S017	CHAN Yuet-ming	44	(1) Waste

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-EEB(E)001

(Question Serial No. S017)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (1) Waste

Controlling Officer: Director of Environmental Protection (Samuel CHUI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

First of all, please note that there will be a joint development of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Boundary Control Points Economic Belt (the BCPs Economic Belt) in the Northern Metropolis, in particular near the boundary control points (BCPs). When exploring the site for constructing the third incinerator, the Administration should select a site that is far away from the BCPs and residential areas to avoid affecting the development of the BCPs Economic Belt. Second, regarding the inclusion of uninhabited islands for site selection, the reasons for rejection as mentioned in your reply are devoid of any statistical support and therefore unconvincing. Will the Administration commence a site search study covering uninhabited islands and announce the findings when exploring the site for constructing the third incinerator?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

The Government promulgated in 2021 the “Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035” to advocate the vision of “Waste Reduction · Resources Circulation · Zero Landfill”, outlining a number of waste management strategies and measures to reduce the total amount of waste generated by pushing ahead waste reduction and recycling while expediting the development of a network of advanced and highly efficient modern waste-to-energy (WtE) facilities. The ultimate goal is to move away from the reliance on landfills for disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) by around 2035. We are building the first modern WtE incinerator (I-PARK1) adjacent to Shek Kwu Chau at full speed and have started planning the development of the second one (I-PARK2) in Tsang Tsui, Tuen Mun. To meet the long-term demand arising from the economic and population growth of Hong Kong, we have to keep enhancing our incineration capability. As promulgated in the 2022 Policy Address, the Government will study developing more modern WtE incinerators in the Northern Metropolis to tie in with the future urban development of Hong Kong.

The Northern Metropolis will be the most vibrant area where urban development and major population growth of Hong Kong in the next 20 years will take place. To this end, the Government has to plan ahead with the development of modern WtE incinerators to provide the essential infrastructure for the future development of Hong Kong.

Due to the geographical distribution and facility configuration of the refuse transfer stations, it is more effective for I-PARK1, located on the artificial island adjacent to Shek Kwu Chau, and I-PARK2, situated at the waterfront of Tsang Tsui in Tuen Mun, to receive MSW from urban districts, New Territories West and New Territories South. The Northern Metropolis covers extensive inland areas that will accommodate a population of 2.5 million and is estimated to generate about 30% of Hong Kong's MSW on a daily basis. The construction of modern WtE incinerators in the Northern Metropolis for on-site treatment of MSW will not only strengthen the MSW treatment capacity in New Territories East and North after completion of the Northern Metropolis, but also avoid traffic impact and environmental nuisance generated from cross-district transportation of waste and minimise carbon footprints.

Having regard to the above, the Government does not have any plan at this stage to construct the third WtE incinerator on uninhabited islands. In collaboration with the Development Bureau and the Planning Department, we are in the process of identifying potential sites suitable for the development of modern WtE incinerators in the Northern Metropolis with the aim of optimising its infrastructure and road planning. We will duly consider various factors of site selection, including the overall distribution of waste management infrastructures, waste transportation arrangements, available land area, time and cost of the construction, environmental conditions, planning in the vicinity, etc.

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