



CHAPTER  2

ACT NOW FOR A PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY SCHEME



2.1

Waste reduction is the key for this term of Government as it is key to cut down our reliance on waste treatment and disposal facilities. We will implement policies to reduce, recycle, properly treat waste and promote the development of local recycling industries. We will also implement PRSs, and progressively extend the coverage of the Product Eco-Responsibility Ordinance (Cap 603).



I am proud to participate in glass recycling.

Mr. Sammy Yu of the MTR Corporation is actively involved in promoting glass bottle recycling in the residential estates and commercial buildings under the management of the Corporation. The “Bottle to Brick Recycling Programme” is one of the major private initiatives on glass bottle recycling. It demonstrates the commitment of individuals and the private sector to share out their eco-responsibility.



PRS on glass

beverage bottles must be built upon our local experience.

2.2

Hong Kong has gained considerable PRS experience through the successful Environmental Levy Scheme on Plastic Shopping Bags², which aims to change behaviour. We will shortly extend the coverage of plastic bag levy; we are also drafting legislation on another PRS dealing with waste electrical and electronic equipment (“WEEE”).

Remark :

2. The 50-cent levy creates a financial disincentive against excessive use of plastic shopping bags and the scheme covers about 3,000 registered retail outlets.



2.3

The new scheme on glass beverage bottles is planned with reference to the local PRS model as illustrated at Annex A. In gist —

- (a) Products are mostly imported (instead of manufactured) in Hong Kong. In other places with local production, domestic PRS measures create the incentives for businesses to adopt manufacturing processes and product designs that are more environmentally-friendly.
- (b) Relying on external operations will generate extra transportation emissions and does not offer sufficient reliability. Thus, our PRS strategy must aim to create a local solution comprising —

- (i) an efficient collection mechanism with key stakeholders mandated by laws or coordinated by a government management contractor to control the movement of products from consumers to treatment facilities; and
 - (ii) other statutory regulations, such as import/export control (to avoid dumping outside Hong Kong or leakage to neighbouring jurisdictions) and other licensing requirements (on collection, storage and processing etc.) to enforce minimum performance standards in the recycling operations.
- (c) In line with the “polluter pays” principle, there should be a recycling fee, pre-paid on new products and collected at some point of the supply chain, to recover the PRS costs.

Green procurement policy is a key
to glass beverage bottle recycling.

2.4

A local solution for waste glass beverage bottles must have outlets for the recycled glass. The Government took the lead through its green procurement³ policy. In 2004, a study funded by Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) successfully used the granules from crushed glass beverage bottles to produce concrete paving blocks (“eco-pavers”). Through the promotion of green procurement, Highways Department has since October 2010 mandated the priority use of these eco-pavers for road maintenance contracts. Other public works departments and Housing Department have also started adopting the use of eco-pavers where appropriate. In 2011, about 171,000 m² of eco-pavers (absorbing some 4,000 tonnes of waste glass) were used in various public works, equivalent to covering the pavement of Nathan Road (both sides) for five times. We are also actively looking into other feasible applications of recycled glass in construction works.

Remark :

3. Green procurement refers to the purchasing of products and services that cause minimal adverse impacts on the environment. It incorporates human health and environmental concerns into the search for high quality products and services at competitive prices.



2.5

We encourage private sector participation in the use of construction materials that contain recycled materials (including recycled glass). For instance, private developers may join the government initiative to promote a wider use of eco-pavers or other feasible applications of recycled glass. The local building environmental assessment system, BEAM Plus, also awards credits for the use of recycled materials in buildings. This will increase the market demand for recycled glass in both public and private sectors and thus promote the growth of local glass recycling industry.



Voluntary schemes have boosted awareness on waste glass beverage bottle recycling.

2.6

In parallel, we have been encouraging different sectors and communities to take part in various voluntary schemes, which have in turn created the condition for a territory-wide, mandatory PRS on glass beverage bottles.

2.7

With the financial support from the Environment and Conservation Fund (“ECF”) and our technical advice, five schemes (details at [Annex B](#)) are in operation. These voluntary programmes contribute environmental benefits outlined in paragraph 1.5. In particular, they have helped enhance community awareness on glass recycling and educate the public to practise source separation. In addition, these programmes enable the setting up of 270 collection points across the territory. Over 120 public/private housing estates have participated, covering some 880,000 people (i.e. around 12% of the total Hong Kong population). As the scope for reuse outlets is expanding, we are confident that we are ready to pursue a mandatory PRS on glass beverage bottles.





2.8

We do not propose to include other waste glass bottles as part of the PRS at this stage. From an environmental perspective, these bottles could be recycled if they are properly cleansed. However this may require the use of solvents to clean bottles that contain chemical substances such as cosmetics and medicine and other greasy liquids. The process itself could cause other environmental impacts. As regards bottles containing food/sauce, in addition to thorough cleansing, which may add costs to the treatment process, imposing a recycling fee on these common general household items may generate concerns in the community. After we have dealt with glass beverage bottles, we can then look into other types of glass containers. In the meantime, cleansed food/sauce bottles by the public are also welcome to be recycled, and we will promote the good habit of cleansing these containers before they are placed into recycle bins.

Consultation Question #1

Do you agree that we should now proceed to pursue a mandatory PRS on glass beverage bottles as a priority among different types of glass bottles, because this removes the largest number of glass bottles?



2.9

In parallel with this public consultation, we will continue to set up more collection points pending the mandatory PRS being put in place. Through the support of the Environmental Campaign Committee, we have been providing recycle bins to the private housing estates and buildings for glass bottles recycling. Interested parties can connect with suitable voluntary programmes to arrange collection services. We will continue to provide support to these voluntary programmes and assist in their expansion. We are also working with relevant government departments to implement glass bottle recycling at government venues and public places. For instance, with the assistance of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, we will on a pilot basis set up some waste glass bottle collection bins at appropriate locations in some outlying islands, including Lamma and Cheung Chau, to encourage public participation in source separation of waste glass bottles. We will also work with the property management of public and private venues with dining facilities to provide provision of waste beverage bottle facilities and arrange for their recycling on a voluntary basis.

