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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2014-15

Director of Bureau : Secretary for the Environment

Session No. : 7

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB01

(Question Serial No.: S0036)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

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

Programme: (2) Air

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (Ms. Anissa WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question (Member Question No.):

Regarding Reply Serial No. ENB159, will the Administration consider discussing with the relevant Mainland departments the monitoring of more air pollutants, such as fine suspended particulates (PM2.5) or carbon monoxide (CO), under the Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

The environmental protection authorities of both Guangdong and Hong Kong are exploring the enhancement of the existing Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network. This includes considering the inclusion of the monitoring of fine suspended particulates and carbon monoxide at the monitoring stations. We will announce the details once they are finalised.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB02

(Question Serial No.: S0058)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

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

Programme: (2) Air

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (Ms. Anissa WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question (Member Question No. :):

1. In Replies Serial No. ENB186 and ENB187, the Administration reveals that the odour complaints against the South East New Territories (SENT) Landfill have increased over the years. Has the Administration assessed whether this is the bad consequence caused by ineffective mitigation measures? Has consideration been given to closing the SENT Landfill to eradicate the problem? Separately, what external professional staff have been recruited for the odour monitoring team? How come the expenditure for this year will increase by \$700,000?
2. The Administration also mentions that an equipment has been installed at Tai Chik Sha Fire Station to monitor the PM2.5 level. Could monitoring data for the recent half year be provided in writing?

Asked by: Hon. FAN Kwok-wai, Gary

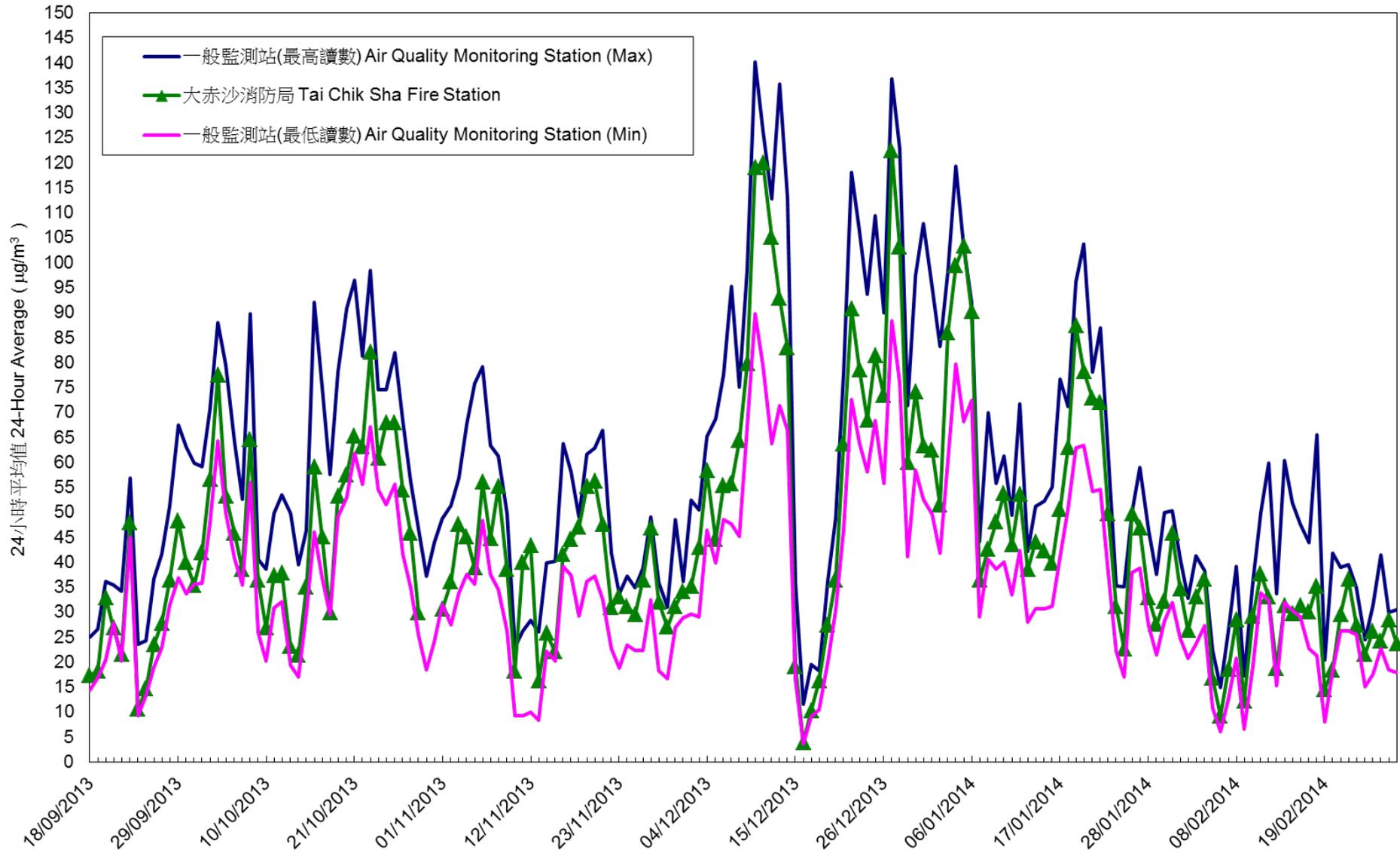
Reply:

1. To further reduce the impact of the landfill on neighbouring areas, the Administration has implemented a number of mitigation measures both inside and outside the landfill to alleviate the odour situation arising from the delivery of waste and landfill operation as far as possible. Moreover, after the full commissioning of the Sludge Treatment Facility by end 2014, odorous sludge will no longer be landfilled; and amendments to the Waste Disposal (Designated Waste Disposal Facility) Regulation were passed by the Legislative Council on 22 January 2014 to change the use of the SENT Landfill to accept only construction waste so that the odour concern arising from municipal solid waste and other wastes could be removed at root. Subject to funding approval by the Finance Committee for the extension of the SENT Landfill, the Government will appoint the commencement date of the amended regulation. By then, not only will the odour issue of the SENT Landfill be resolved, the number of vehicular trips going to the landfill will also drop from about 1 000 to about 500 daily, which will further improve the environmental hygiene and odour problem.

All members of the odour monitoring team have received professional training by the Hong Kong Productivity Council; they have to pass the olfactory sensitivity test before being qualified as odour monitoring personnel. The expenditure last year involved odour monitoring work for about eight months. As we expect that the work will be carried out throughout this year, the expenditure involved will be higher than last year.

2. The Environmental Protection Department has installed an equipment on the roof of Tai Chik Sha Fire Station to monitor the level of fine suspended particles (PM2.5) at Wan Po Road. Full monitoring lasting for 12 months has commenced since 18 September 2013. As at end of February, the data obtained were similar to those recorded by other General Air Quality Monitoring Stations in Hong Kong (see Annex). Part of the data (up to 30 November 2013) was submitted at the request of the Housing & Environmental Hygiene Committee and the Local Environmental Facilities Monitoring Task Force under the Sai Kung District Council and discussed at the meeting held in January 2014. Please refer to the following website for details:
http://www.districtcouncils.gov.hk/sk/doc/en/committee_meetings_doc/SK_hehc_2014_020_TC.pdf

大赤沙消防局監測微細懸浮粒子
Monitoring PM2.5 at Tai Chik Sha Fire Station



CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB03

(Question Serial No.: S0039)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

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

Programme: (1) Waste

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (Ms. Anissa WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question (Member Question No.):

According to Reply Serial No. ENB211, since one of the Phase 1 tenants of the EcoPark cannot commission its recycling operation in accordance with the lease agreement, the Government has initiated the legal process for termination of the lease agreement. Is the Administration aware of the reason(s) why the tenant cannot commission its operation? How will the Administration handle the recovered site?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK Wai-keung

Reply:

According to the lease agreement of the EcoPark tenant concerned, commissioning of recycling operation is required within one year after the agreement comes into effect. However, since the lease period of the agreement began on 15 August 2009, the tenant's progress in plant planning, design and construction has been very slow. Despite our best endeavours to render assistance, the tenant cannot meet the relevant legal requirements on the plant and operational procedures, and is unable to obtain a licence under the Waste Disposal Ordinance. Given the tenant's prolonged delay in fulfilling the lease agreement, the Administration has started the initiation of legal process for termination of the lease agreement based on the principles of effective land use and upholding fairness in tendering. Upon recovery of the site, the Administration will put it up for open tender again for recycling of local waste.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB04

(Question Serial No.: S0037)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

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

Programme: (3) Noise

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (Ms. Anissa WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question (Member Question No.):

Regarding Reply Serial No. ENB221, the reply to the second part mentions that “completed noise barrier retrofitting works” includes “4. Tsing Tsuen Bridge (Tsuen Wan and Tsing Yi)”. While the Government has compiled statistics on the number of residents benefited from the barriers, has the Government compiled any statistics on the number of residents affected by increase in noise upon completion of the barriers? Remarks: since the completion of the relevant barriers, the nearby housing estates have been complaining about noise affecting their estates as a result of the works.

Asked by: Hon. MAK Mei-kuen, Alice

Reply:

The aim of retrofitting of noise barriers on Tsing Tsuen Bridge at Tsing Yi section is to reduce the excessive traffic noise impact of the Bridge on nearby residential buildings including Cheung On Estate in Tsing Yi. To prevent noise reflection from the retrofitted noise barriers to other residential buildings (including Tierra Verde) opposite to Cheung On Estate, noise absorptive material is used in the retrofitted noise barriers. Relevant environmental reports also show that the traffic noise at the residential buildings nearby would not be increased as a result of the works. The Highways Department measured the noise levels at Tierra Verde before commencement and after completion of the noise barrier retrofitting works in September 2010 and January 2011 respectively. The data indicated that the noise levels after completion of the works were not higher than the figures before commencement of the works and also did not exceed the 70 dB(A) standard stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG). In response to the residents' concern, our Department reviewed the traffic noise situation at Tierra Verde again in September 2013. The data also indicated that the noise level was not higher than the figure before commencement of the works or the 70 dB(A) standard stipulated in the HKPSG.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB05

(Question Serial No.: S0038)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

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

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (Ms. Anissa WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question (Member Question No. :)

In the reply to the third part of Reply Serial No. ENB 214, the Government indicates that it is devoted to improving the environment and community facilities in the vicinity of the waste facilities. In particular, there is mention of provision of water supply to remote villages. Will the Government consider providing potable water supply to Tai Long Village which is only 500 metres away from the proposed incinerator in Shek Kwu Chau?

Asked by: Hon. MAK Mei-kuen, Alice

Reply:

The Administration has followed up on and studied the demand for provision of potable water supply to Tai Long Village. The Water Supplies Department currently has no plan to carry out the water supply project because of the high per capita cost, but will closely monitor the district development, population figures and other factors that require consideration, and review the viability of the project in due course.

The Environment Bureau will set up a District Liaison Group to enable representatives of the neighbouring communities to jointly monitor the actual situation of the proposed Integrated Waste Management Facilities near Shek Kwu Chau with the Government, the facility operator and professionals during the construction and operation stages. It will also follow up on and address the demands and needs of the communities.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB06

(Question Serial No. SV008)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

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

Programme: (1) Waste

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (Ms. Anissa WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question (Member Question No.):

Pursuant to members' queries on food waste recovery, and taking into consideration the fact that biodiesel can be extracted from food waste, the Administration is requested to provide information on whether it would introduce measures to encourage operators of biodiesel factories to participate in the recovery of food waste, which, thereby, would make the food waste recovery market more viable.

Asked by: Hon. WU Chi-wai

Reply:

The Environment Bureau unveiled in February 2014 "A Food Waste & Yard Waste Plan for Hong Kong 2014-2022" (the Plan), mapping out a strategic framework, specific targets, policy initiatives and action plans for the treatment of food waste and yard waste.

Under the Plan, amongst others, Hong Kong needs to build a network of organic waste treatment facilities (OWTFs) in order to meet our disposal reduction target by 2022. In order to build up Hong Kong's ability to separate and recycle food waste, we welcome private sector participation. The Organic Waste Treatment Facilities (OWTF) Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be taken forward using the established "Design-Build-Operate" arrangement. We welcome all private sectors, including biodiesel factory operators, to take part in the recovery and treatment of food waste.