

MINUTES of the meeting of the Hong Kong Business Coalition on the Environment (BCE) held on 29 June 2007 at 4:30 pm in the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman

James Graham Convenor, BCE

Guests

Raymond Fan Environmental Protection Department
Rayson Chan Environmental Protection Department

Members

Jack Maisano American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Kim Murphy Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Helen Cochrane Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Andrew Thomson Business Environment Council
Bruce Hicks Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Jens-Erik Olsen Danish Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong
Wolfgang Ehmann German Chamber of Industry & Commerce HK, S China, Vietnam
Grace Leung Hong Kong Bahrain Business Association
Alex Fong Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Gail Kendall Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
W K Chan Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Arthur Bowring Hong Kong Shipowners' Association Ltd
Robert Agnew Irish Business Forum
Kang Ho Cheon Korean Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Olevia Yim US & Foreign Commercial Service, American Consulate General HK
Thinex Shek Meeting Secretary

Prior to the BCE meeting, an informal meeting was held at 4:00 am at which Dr Edgar Cheng, Chairman of the Sustainable Development Council invited support from chambers in the public engagement exercise on better air quality.

1. Presentation on HKSAR's Waste Policies and Management

The Chairman welcomed Mr Raymond Fan, Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Department and his Administrative Officer Mr Rayson Chan to the meeting. Mr Fan was then invited to give a presentation on the Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014), covering targets and roadmap, as well as source separation, EcoPark, Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS), environmental levy on plastic shopping bags, MSW charging and Integrated Waste Management facilities. Presentation file can be found at www.chamber.org.hk/bce.

1.1 In response to Mr Arthur Bowring's question on the composition of wastes, Mr Raymond Fan told members that about half of the wastes were generated from domestic households. Construction and demolition waste had declined by 40% since the introduction of the charging scheme.

- 1.2 Mr Arthur Bowring felt that the 50-cent levy might not be effective in reducing the indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags. He gave the Australian experience of placing bins in the supermarkets to recycle shopping bags, and asked about any measure to deal with used batteries. Mr Raymond Fan replied that people could dispose plastic bags in the present 3-color recycle bins. The fundamental principle of the levy would be to encourage people to think whether they need as many plastic bags as they usually take. Currently there is a scheme to collect rechargeable batteries for recycling.
- 1.3 Mr Wolfgang Ehmann added that non-rechargeable batteries are not recyclable, so they could only be collected and stored deep underground. He then asked if there would be any scheme to ship domestic waste to China similar to that for the construction waste. Mr Raymond Fan replied that the materials from construction shipped to China was actually usable materials for reclamation and other construction works. It is against the international convention to ship waste across the boundary.
- 1.4 Mr Bruce Hicks asked where and how the recycling bins could be acquired from EPD for placement in small estates and outside residential sites. Mr Raymond Fan replied that different sizes and designs of waste separation bins are available. The EPD could provide advice on getting suitable recycling bins.
- 1.5 Mr Robert Agnew shared the Irish experience of charging about HK\$2 for plastic bags and queried about the effectiveness of the low levy proposed for Hong Kong. Mr Raymond Fan answered that the 50-cent level came up from the public survey conducted at the "No Plastic Bag" days by the green groups followed by another opinion survey by the government. It seemed that the levy was acceptable to most people, and Government also worried that a high levy on plastic bags could result in more usage of paper bags. The Government would evaluate the result and review the levy after the implementation. He also compared the achievements on recycling among different countries, and believed that PRS would be an effective tool to reduce waste.
- 1.6 Mr Jens-Erik Olsen asked about the timetable. Mr Fan said that he was working on the proposal of the levy on plastic bags, which would go through the ExCo and Legco. A Bills Committee would then be formed to study and assess the proposal. Then the levy scheme could be implemented in late 2008. If not, the Legco would be disbanded next year because of the election, and the process had to be repeated again.
- 1.7 The Chairman commented that Hong Kong population produced 6.2 million tones of waste per year, nearly one ton per resident doubling the volume of Europe. Mr Kang Ho Cheon felt that Chinese generous dining habit had also produced substantial foods waste. Mr Raymond Fan estimated that foods waste contributed over 20% of total domestic waste.
- 1.8 Mr Raymond Fan concluded that it had not been an easy task to implement polluter-pay principle, and it would be important to promote a culture of environmental protection and conservation by education.

The Chairman thanked Mr Raymond Fan for coming to the BCE meeting. Mr Raymond Fan and Mr Rayson Chan left the meeting at this point.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the BCE meeting held on 19 March 2007 were confirmed and signed.

3. Project CLEAN AIR Update

- 3.1 Dr W K Chan briefed members that a training seminar on energy conservation and emissions reduction was held on 5 June 2007 – The World Environment Day – in Guangzhou, attended by some 200 Guangdong and 50 Hong Kong businessmen.
- 3.2 Dr Gail Kendall added that the Clean Air Charter Business Guidebook was widely circulated at the training seminar.
- 3.3 The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce and BCE, in partnership with the Business Environment Council (BEC) had commenced the Clean Air Charter Certification Pilot Scheme. Eight companies had been selected for the scheme. Upon completion of the pilot scheme, the certification programme would be refined and rolled out to all Charter signatories.
- 3.4 Dr Andrew Thomson briefed members that the BEC had conducted a few site visits and/or discussions with the pilot companies. Most of them had not yet implemented Clean Air Charter commitments. He was confident to see many good case studies for other endorsers' reference after completion of the pilot scheme. He had also given presentations on the pilot scheme at two workshops hosted by the Government.

4. Environmental Initiatives of BCE Members

- 4.1 Mr Jack Maisano told members that the American Chamber was in the process of reviewing its Environment Survey, which would be released in August.
- 4.2 Mr Jens-Erik Olsen told members that the InterCham Sustainable Development Committee would be organising a Pearl River Delta Leadership Forum on Clean Industry on 2 November 2007 in Guangzhou. The purpose of the event would be to create the awareness of clean production technologies by showcasing international and Hong Kong role models, and to facilitate technology transfer through exhibition.
- 4.3 Dr Andrew Thomson told members that the HSBC would be launching the clean equipment financing programme on 19 July 2007.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Confirmed by

Secretary
16 July 2007

Chairman