

BFAC appreciates Government's efforts in protecting environment and facilitating development of local circular economy

The following is issued on behalf of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee Secretariat:

The Business Facilitation Advisory Committee held its 45th meeting today (May 20). At the meeting, members were briefed by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) on the proposed Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers (PPRS) for the proper and effective management of waste plastic beverage containers.

The EPD has launched a three-month public consultation which will end tomorrow (May 21). Members were briefed on the content and key elements of the proposed PPRS, including the appropriate application of reverse vending machines to enhance the recovery efficiency and facilitate the provision of rebates, having certain retail stores selling pre-packaged beverages serve as designated return points, a rebate arrangement to be set up to encourage the public to return plastic beverage containers, a levy to be imposed at the beverage supplier level to fund the operations of the PPRS, and licensing control on the operation of recycling facilities to ensure proper recycling and treatment of waste plastic beverage containers.

The Committee noted the EPD's proposal of introducing the PPRS to minimise the impacts caused by plastic beverage containers on the environment and appreciated its efforts in protecting the environment and facilitating the development of the local circular economy.

The Committee also received the work report of its three task forces:

Wholesale and Retail Task Force (WRTF)

- The Government published a public consultation document in December 2020 on the proposed amendments to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF) for strengthening the regulation of harmful substances such as industrially produced trans fats and mycotoxins. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) sought views of the WRTF on the proposed amendments and subsequently discussed the subject with relevant parties and provided supplementary information.
- The EPD briefed members on the Voluntary Scheme for Phasing Out Personal

Care and Cosmetic Products Containing Microbeads. The WRTF welcomed the Scheme and appreciated the Government's efforts in environmental protection and enhancing the public's understanding of microbead-related subjects.

Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF)

- Apart from the WRTF, the FRSTF also consulted its members on the proposed amendments to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF) and their views were forwarded to the CFS accordingly.
- The FEHD briefed the FRSTF on the ventilation requirement in seating areas of catering premises and the action required of the licensees in complying with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). The FRSTF thanked the FEHD for the briefing and assistance in addressing the trade's concern.
- To tie in with the Government's measures to support enterprises and safeguard jobs under the epidemic, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) briefed the FRSTF on the Love Upgrading Special Scheme 3, which renders assistance to the underemployed or employees on no-pay leave in skills upgrading. The FRSTF expressed appreciation to the ERB for the briefing and its work on supporting the employees affected by the economic downturn.

Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF)

- The Office of the Communications Authority briefed the BLGTF on the Subsidy Scheme for Encouraging Early Deployment of 5G. The BLGTF welcomed the Scheme, which will foster innovation and smart city development and contribute to enhancing Hong Kong's overall competitiveness.
- The Buildings Department (BD) briefed the BLGTF on the main features of the Building (Minor Works) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 (Amendment Regulation). The BLGTF acknowledged the BD's work to introduce the Amendment Regulation to extend the scope of minor works to facilitate business operations.
- Further to the measure introduced by the Fire Services Department to streamline the renewal of Temporary Places of Public Entertainment Licences in theme parks and attractions, the FEHD and the BD have

devised similar measures to dovetail with the renewal process. The BLGTF welcomed the measures, which will help the trades to save operational costs and administrative burden.

The Committee also expressed appreciation for the commitment and achievements of the bureaux and departments in continuously enhancing their business licensing services under the "Be the Smart Regulator" Programme.

Papers for the Committee meeting are available at www.gov.hk/en/business/supportenterprises/bf/advisory/index.htm for public access.