

# Government statement on Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018

In response to the decision of the Bills Committee on Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 (Amendment Bill) to discontinue its scrutiny work on the Amendment Bill and report to the House Committee its decision to discontinue its work, a spokesman for the Environment Bureau today (June 22) made the following statement:

"The Government is disappointed that the Amendment Bill could not be passed in the current term of the Legislative Council (LegCo) after around 34 hours of discussion in 15 Bills Committee meetings, following the Bill Committee's decision to discontinue its scrutiny work. The Government, nonetheless, expressed gratitude to the efforts made by the Chairman of the Bills Committee and members' deliberations.

Since the introduction of the Amendment Bill into the LegCo in November 2018, the Government has all along spared no effort in facilitating the Bills Committee to scrutinise the Amendment Bill and explaining its policy on municipal solid waste (MSW) charging as well as the content of the Amendment Bill. Meanwhile, the Government has listened to the views of the LegCo Members and the public, while stepping up the work on waste reduction and recycling.

The proposed policy on MSW charging, modus operandi and arrangements under the Amendment Bill were based on the consensus fostered within the community through consultation with the public and trades for a considerable time in the past, including a bottom-up engagement process. Generally, relevant trades found it acceptable and members of public were receptive to the proposal, which would help relieve the increasingly tremendous pressure on landfills in Hong Kong and reduce carbon emissions to combat climate change.

Premised on the 'polluter-pays' principle, MSW charging is part and parcel of the waste management strategy. Having said that, it is imperative to adopt a multi-pronged approach to achieve waste reduction effectively rather than relying solely on the implementation of MSW charging. To this end, the Government will continue to enhance various waste reduction and recycling measures to develop a circular economy. Starting from the 2019-20 financial year, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has allocated additional recurrent resources to support these measures.

The EPD's efforts on strengthening waste reduction and recycling include optimising a community recycling network; launching a waste paper collection and recycling service; implementing pilot schemes to provide a free collection service for waste plastics from non-commercial and non-industrial sources and food waste from some of the Government and public organisations,

schools and private housing estates, etc, respectively. Also included is kicking off a pilot scheme on reverse vending machines to facilitate the implementation of the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers in the future; establishing the Green Outreach to provide an outreaching service and provide the community with on-site briefings and assistance in carrying out waste separation and clean recycling, and taking forward the publicity campaign on 'Reduce and Recycle 2.0' recently launched.

The social environment in Hong Kong last year has affected the operation of the Government and the LegCo alike. Apart from the Amendment Bill, other legislative proposals of the Government have been affected. Although the Amendment Bill could not be passed before the end of the current term of the LegCo, the Government's work on waste reduction and recycling will not pause. We shall continue to promote waste reduction at source and enhance community recycling with a view that the commercial and industrial sectors as well as members of the public would practise waste reduction and recycling proactively in their daily lives to achieve 'Use Less, Waste Less'. With the EPD's 'Reduce and Recycle 2.0' campaign and other relevant environmental protection measures, we shall strike jointly to relieve the pressure on landfills, reduce waste and minimise carbon emissions to support the green recovery in Hong Kong."