

Government welcomes passage of Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 by Legislative Council

The Government has welcomed the passage of the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 (the Amendment Bill) by the Legislative Council (LegCo) today (August 26), and expressed gratitude to LegCo Members and the Bills Committee for their time and efforts devoted, which facilitated the passage of the Amendment Bill.

A Government spokesman said, "Municipal solid waste charging (MSW charging) has been deliberated and discussed in society for years. The passage of the Amendment Bill by the LegCo today signifies a critical milestone in the waste management work in Hong Kong."

The spokesman said, "MSW charging is a common economic means adopted internationally to motivate the general public to reduce waste. This is also a driving force that fuels the downstream recycling industry and facilitates the advancement to the vision of "Waste Reduction&Zero Landfill" as set out in the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035. It also forms an integral part of the development of a circular economy in Hong Kong."

The spokesman added, "It is challenging to introduce and implement MSW charging, which requires the concerted efforts of various sectors and the general public. On one hand we need to avoid waste generation and practise recycling, and on the other hand we need to handle the remaining waste properly in order to promote green transformation in Hong Kong with a view to reducing both waste generation and carbon emissions. The scheme aims to drive behavioural changes and the Government will adopt a multi-pronged approach to implement it. This includes (i) putting in place a preparatory period of 18 months as a basic arrangement to enable the Government and various sectors of the community to get prepared; (ii) devoting resources to strengthen recycling support in the community; (iii) launching a public education and publicity campaign and setting up Green Outreach to provide assistance and support to different sectors through outreach services; and (iv) adopting a risk-based approach to take appropriate enforcement action as the backing of the scheme."

The Government will continue to communicate closely with LegCo Members and stakeholders, and welcome their opinions and suggestions regarding the varied preparatory work in taking forward MSW charging, including the distribution of designated garbage bags to residential households at the early stage of implementation of MSW charging, as well as gradual arrangements for free collection of food waste from the catering sector. The

Government will also maintain close liaison with stakeholders and various sectors including property management companies, frontline cleaning staff, and waste collectors through various platforms, so as to provide relevant practitioners with related information and training, and draw up guidelines to assist them to prepare for the implementation of MSW charging.