

LCQ10: Use of the space on the rooftops of service reservoirs

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Helena Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

At present, there are more than 220 service reservoirs across the territory, which are used for providing transient storage for fresh water or sea water. The Water Supplies Department (WSD) allocates the space on the rooftops of some service reservoirs to other government departments and private organisations as venues for recreational and other activities. Regarding service reservoirs with space on their rooftops available for allocation (which stood at 100 across the territory as at the 14th of last month), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective (i) names, (ii) capacities, (iii) numbers of air vents, (iv) roof areas, and (v) live loads of the roofs (and whether they are five kPa or above) of various service reservoirs, and set out such information one by one by the District Council district to which the service reservoirs belong;

(2) since when the policy of allocating the space on the rooftops of service reservoirs has been implemented; of the reasons for implementing this policy and its specific details;

(3) of the details of the allocation of the space on the rooftops in each of the past five years, including (i) names of government departments/private organisations to which the space was allocated, (ii) allocation periods, (iii) ways of leasing/granting, (iv) annual rents and rates payable (if applicable), and (v) use of the space on the rooftops, and set out such information by name of service reservoir; and

(4) of the WSD's specific measures to regulate activities conducted on the space on the rooftops of service reservoirs, in order to prevent contamination of the fresh water stored in the service reservoirs?

Reply:

President,

To make gainful use of space, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has all along been opening up rooftops of service reservoirs for recreational use. The WSD currently has 171 fresh water service reservoirs and 54 sea water service reservoirs, of which 101 have rooftops suitable for opening up for recreational use. The remaining service reservoirs are not suitable for

such purpose because they are either in the vicinity of water treatment works or located in remote locations; or their rooftops are either of non-structural design or too small. Among the 101 service reservoirs with rooftops suitable for opening up for recreational use, 49 have been allocated to different government departments and private organisations, and their uses mainly include sports grounds, sitting-out areas, parks, playgrounds and training fields.

My response to the four parts of Dr Hon Wong's question is as follows:

(1) The WSD currently has 101 fresh water service reservoirs and sea water service reservoirs with rooftops suitable for opening up for recreational use. Details of these service reservoirs are grouped by District Council district and listed in Annex 1.

(2) According to the WSD's record, the opening up of rooftops of service reservoirs for recreational use for making gainful use of space has started since 1960s of the last century. Under the prevailing policy, when designing a new service reservoir, the WSD would consult the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) on whether the LCSD would like to use the rooftop of the new service reservoir for recreational use. For existing service reservoirs, if their rooftops are suitable for recreational use, the LCSD, other government departments or private organisations can approach the WSD with their proposal. If the WSD considers the proposed use of the rooftop of service reservoir suitable, the concerned government department or private organisation can submit an application to the relevant District Lands Office for the allocation of the service reservoir rooftop for the proposed use. For applications from private organisations, support from the relevant policy bureau is required. If the allocation is approved, the District Lands Office will grant the land of the concerned service reservoir rooftop to the applicant in the form of a government land allocation, a Short Term Tenancy or a land licence. One of the conditions of the land grant is that the applicant shall comply with the conditions imposed by the WSD, including the proper management of the facility to avoid any damage to the service reservoir and contamination of the water stored therein.

(3) There are currently 49 fresh water and sea water service reservoirs with rooftops allocated to different government departments and private organisations for recreational use. Upon consulting the Lands Department, the Government Property Agency and the Rating and Valuation Department, the requested details on the use of the rooftops of these service reservoirs are listed in Annex 2.

(4) Service reservoirs adopt enclosed design and are constructed with reinforced concrete. All structural parts of service reservoirs, including perimeter walls and rooftops, are designed to be water-proof. This design can prevent seepage and contamination of the water stored inside the service reservoirs by external pollutants. The ventilators at service reservoir rooftops are also designed to effectively prevent ingress of foreign substances into the service reservoirs to contaminate the water stored therein.

Moreover, the government departments and private organisations being granted of the use of the rooftops of service reservoirs must comply with the conditions imposed by the WSD to properly manage the facilities and prevent contamination of the water stored in the service reservoirs. These conditions include restricting the use of rooftops of the service reservoirs to the approved recreational purpose, forbidding use of fertilisers and pesticides, and requiring the recreational area to arrange attendant on duty and sufficient lighting when it is open. The WSD will arrange inspections to ensure the users are complying with the conditions. The WSD will also take drinking water samples from service reservoirs regularly for water quality tests to ensure the quality of the drinking water stored therein is not affected.