

LCQ12: Quota-free Scheme for Hong Kong Private Cars Travelling to Guangdong via Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

Following is a question by the Hon Edmund Wong and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (July 3):

Question:

It has been reported that on the evening of the Tuen Ng Festival holiday on the 10th of last month, some members of the public who drove back to Hong Kong under the Quota-free Scheme for Hong Kong Private Cars Travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (the Scheme) had to spend at least about four hours on the road before they arrived at Hong Kong due to severe traffic congestion at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Zhuhai Port. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the five dates with the highest numbers of private vehicles arriving and departing via the HZMB Hong Kong Port on a single day since the implementation of the Scheme (set out by the respective numbers of outbound and inbound private vehicles);

(2) whether the authorities have reviewed with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Authority the situation on the 10th of last month with long queues of vehicles departing from the HZMB Zhuhai Port and returning to the Hong Kong Port; if so, of the contents of the review;

(3) given that at present, applicants are only required to reserve with the authorities the date and time of their vehicles' departure from Hong Kong under the Scheme, whether the authorities will consider further requiring applicants to register the date and time of their return trips to Hong Kong, so as to effectively control the maximum number of private vehicles using the HZMB ports for clearance at the same period of time; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) of the number of cases detected by the authorities since the beginning of this year involving private vehicles travelling to Zhuhai via HZMB outside the reserved/assigned specified date and time; the measures currently put in place by the authorities to prevent such acts, and whether relevant measures will be enhanced to eradicate such acts; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

"Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles" (the Scheme) allows eligible

Hong Kong private cars to travel between Hong Kong and Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) without the need to obtain regular quotas. It facilitates Hong Kong residents' self-driving to Guangdong for business, visiting families or sightseeing on a short-term basis, thereby further making good use of the HZMB and promoting the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Since the implementation of the Scheme in July 2023, the Scheme has been well received by Hong Kong citizens. At present, there are over 64 000 Hong Kong single-plate private cars with the valid permit to travel under the Scheme. The usage of the HZMB has also recorded new highs, among which vehicles under the Scheme account for about 40 per cent. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has all along been monitoring and listening to the opinions from applicants and users about the Scheme while maintaining close communication with the relevant Mainland authorities to implement enhancement measures in a timely manner, with a view to providing citizens with better convenience and travel experience.

Having consulted the Security Bureau and the Transport Department, our reply to Hon Wong's question is as follows:

(1) Since the implementation of the Scheme in July 2023, the top five record dates for outbound and inbound private cars using the HZMB Hong Kong Port in a single day are as follows:

| | Date | Outbound Hong Kong Private Cars (number of trips) | Date | Inbound Hong Kong Private Cars (number of trips) |
|----|-------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| 1. | March 29, 2024 | 9 617 | April 1, 2024 | 10 288 |
| 2. | February 12, 2024 | 8 880 | February 13, 2024 | 10 073 |
| 3. | June 8, 2024 | 8 856 | June 10, 2024 | 9 867 |
| 4. | March 28, 2024 | 8 530 | May 5, 2024 | 9 500 |
| 5. | December 23, 2023 | 8 170 | February 14, 2024 | 8 506 |

(2) and (3) The HKSAR Government has been closely monitoring the operation of the HZMB, especially the clearance and traffic conditions at the HZMB ports during peak days and periods, and has been discussing with the relevant Mainland authorities on enhancing port clearance arrangements. For the HZMB Hong Kong Port, relevant departments have been taking various measures to enhance the clearance capacity, such as deploying manpower flexibly, optimising workflow and making use of innovative technology, etc., as well as operating additional private car clearance kiosks during peak periods to cater for the increasing vehicular flow; TD's mobile application "HKeMobility" has also added real-time traffic snapshots of the HZMB Hong Kong Port vehicle clearance plaza, allowing travellers to more easily obtain the port situation and hence travel flexibly.

For the HZMB Zhuhai Port, the HZMB Authority stated that since the

implementation of the Scheme, relevant authorities have been striving to improve the efficiency through various aspects of work. Relevant authorities are enhancing the facilities and arrangements at the Zhuhai Port, including increasing the clearance lanes for private cars, enhancing the facility clearance efficiency, setting up information dissemination system on instant port clearance situation, stepping up publicity to guide travellers to avoid travelling during peak periods and arranging on-site dispersal, etc. The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the relevant Mainland authorities to closely monitor the operation of the HZMB, continue to study various enhancement measures including return trip booking matters, and implement the feasible measures as soon as possible, with a view to ensuring smooth traffic flow at the HZMB and better use of the HZMB.

(4) As stipulated in the terms and conditions of application for the Scheme, if any vehicles are found violating the travel arrangement (including travelling without a reservation or beyond the specified time), relevant government authorities of the two places may refuse to allow the relevant vehicles to travel to Guangdong via the HZMB, and may deprive them from making another reservation, or even revoke the relevant licences issued to them.

At present, the TD transmits the travel booking information under the Scheme to the law enforcement departments of the Hong Kong Port on a regular basis with a view to facilitating the daily work at the HZMB Hong Kong Port of the departments, and identifying eligible vehicles travelling to Guangdong via the HZMB. The TD has also been maintaining close liaison with the Mainland authorities and conducting random checks on the vehicle crossing records of the Scheme from time to time to ensure that applicants comply with the terms and conditions of the Scheme. Since the travel booking system has been implemented for a short period of time and refined from time to time, the TD currently does not have more representative statistical data on non-compliant cases of travel bookings.