

LCQ14: Charging facilities for electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 28):

Question:

To promote popularisation of electric vehicles (EVs), the Government has formulated a series of policies and measures, including extending the EV public charging network and encouraging owners of private buildings to install EV charging facilities for the parking spaces in their buildings. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government rolled out a three-year programme in 2019 with a view to installing by 2022 over 1 000 additional medium EV chargers in the public car parks under its management, of the latest progress of the programme and whether it anticipates that such target can be met;

(2) given that public charging facilities for EVs are unevenly distributed across the various districts at present, e.g. there being 827 and 39 EV chargers in Kwun Tong and Tai Po districts respectively, with a twenty-fold difference between them, of the Government's new measures to facilitate an even distribution of public charging facilities in the various districts;

(3) given that there is a strong demand for quick charging facilities for EVs, whether the Government will set a growth target for the number of such facilities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) as the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines stipulates that 30 per cent of the private car parking spaces in public car parks will be equipped with EV chargers, whether it will explore raising the percentage; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) given that the Government is carrying out preparatory work for the fee charging arrangement for EV charging services in the car parks under its management, and it is anticipated that charging fees will be imposed from 2025, whether it has assessed if such arrangement will hinder the popularisation of EVs; if it has not assessed, whether it will make such an assessment; if it has assessed, of the outcome;

(6) given that in the first four months after the launch of the EV-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme in October last year, the Government received over 200 applications involving 60 000 parking spaces (i.e. being close to the target of the Scheme), of the number of applications approved by the Government so far and the number of parking spaces involved; given the overwhelming public response to the Scheme, whether the Government will increase the funding allocated to the Scheme (which is \$2 billion); and

(7) as the Environment Bureau is exploring the adjustment of the requirement for the installation of EV charging-enabling infrastructure in the car parks of new buildings so that such infrastructure will cover all parking spaces of new private buildings and provide the power supply needed for medium chargers, of the expected completion date of the relevant exploration and the initial ideas of the adjustment proposal?

Reply:

President,

The Environment Bureau (ENB) announced in March this year our first Hong Kong Roadmap on the Popularisation of Electric Vehicles (EV Roadmap), setting out the long-term policy objectives and plans on the adoption of EVs and their associated supporting facilities. The key measures include ceasing new registration of fuel-propelled private cars (PCs) in 2035 or earlier, proactively promoting trials for electric public transport and commercial vehicles, expanding the EV charging network and promoting its marketisation, training for technicians and mechanics on EV maintenance, formulating a Producer Responsibility Scheme for retired EV batteries, establishing a task force to examine the high-end development of new decarbonisation technologies globally, etc. The Government will also set EVs as standard for procurement and replacement of government small and medium PCs.

As regards the question raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng on the EV public charging network and the installation of EV charging facilities in private buildings, my response is as follows:

(1) The Government allocated \$120 million in 2019-20 to extend the public EV charging network at government car parks in three years, including the installation of additional medium chargers at the car parks managed by the Transport Department, the Government Property Agency, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Tourism Commission which are open to public use. Over 1 000 additional public chargers are expected to be in place by 2022, bringing the total number of public chargers in these car parks to about 1 800.

As at March 2021, 547 additional medium chargers were installed. It is expected that installation of the remaining additional medium chargers will be completed in 2021-22.

(2)&(3) As at end-2020, more than 3 300 EV chargers from the private and public sectors were open to public use, among which over 1 100 were offered by the Government and the rest by the private sector.

As stated in the EV Roadmap, the Government's target is to have at least 5 000 public chargers provided by the private and public sectors by 2025, and we plan to double the number in future. A consultant engaged by the Government completed a study early this year and compiled a list of preliminary potential sites for setting up public quick charging facilities across our 18 districts. The Government will further study the potential sites and devise proposals on setting up such territory-wide facilities. We

will also explore the feasibility of progressively converting some of the existing petrol and liquefied petroleum gas filling stations to quick charging stations in the medium to long term.

Besides, it is noted that quite a number of developers and property management companies have installed EV chargers at their commercial buildings or shopping malls to meet the needs of their tenants or visitors. With the growing EV uptake, the Government will progressively marketise EV charging services and has planned to start imposing EV charging fees in government car parks from around 2025. This will help drive the provision of much more customerised public EV charging services by the private sector and hence further expanding the EV charging network in Hong Kong.

(4) In the new government public car parks, 30 per cent of their PC parking spaces are currently provided with medium chargers while all PC parking spaces are equipped with EV charging-enabling infrastructure including laying cables, distribution boards, conduits, trunking, and the power supply necessary for standard chargers.

As mentioned in the EV Roadmap, in light of the market situation and technological development of EVs, we are exploring to adjust the requirement for EV charging infrastructure in car parks of new private buildings so that all parking spaces are required to be provided with EV charging infrastructure and the necessary power supply that supports medium chargers.

(5) At present, EV charging services in government car parks are free of charge. The policy aims to provide financial incentives to encourage members of the public to switch to EVs in the initial stage of EV development. However, with the increasing EV uptake, the Government will marketise EV charging services progressively to promote their sustainable development.

In this connection, the Government has embarked on the preparation work for imposing EV charging fees in government car parks from around 2025. This, being an appropriate step to support the popularisation of EVs, will help avoid the abuse of EV chargers and, at the same time, stimulate the private sector's participation in providing EV charging services, further expanding the EV charging network in Hong Kong.

(6) The \$2 billion EV-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme (EHSS) has been launched since October 21, 2020. Up to mid-April this year, more than 300 applications involving over 76 000 private parking spaces were received. The Environmental Protection Department has started issuing notices to the approved car parks since February 2021. The approved car parks can proceed with procuring the services of engineering consultants to design and monitor the installation works of EV charging-enabling infrastructure to be carried out by contractors.

The Government will review the effectiveness of and financial resources for the EHSS within this year to decide the way forward.

(7) The ENB is working with other relevant government departments to further enhance the requirement for EV charging infrastructure in car parks of new

private buildings so that all parking spaces in these buildings are required to be provided with such infrastructure and the power supply that supports medium chargers. We will consult stakeholders once our preliminary proposal is available.