

LCQ14: Quota-free Scheme for Hong Kong Private Cars Travelling to Guangdong via Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Man-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

The Quota-free Scheme for Hong Kong Private Cars Travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (the Scheme) has been implemented for a year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of vehicles allocated with application quotas in the computer ballot under the Scheme which had completed all procedures of the two places and successfully been issued with Closed Road Permits by the Transport Department as at the first of this month;

(2) of the following information on the Specified Dates Booking System for use by holders of relevant licences under the Scheme as at the first of this month;

(i) the average number of bookings received per departure day;

(ii) the quota of bookings available per departure day; and

(iii) the departure day with the greatest number of bookings received and the utilisation rate of the quota on that day; and

(3) whether it will consider further shortening the periods of booking for departure and cancellation of booking for departure to after noon on one calendar day before the specified departure day, so as to better facilitate the use of the Bridge by members of the public, thus fully unlocking the functionality of the Bridge; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

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, it has been well received by Hong Kong citizens.

Having consulted the Transport Department (TD), I would like to reply to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Leung Man-kwong as follows:

(1) As at July 1, 2024, the TD issued a total of about 71 000 closed road permits (CRPs) to vehicles approved under the Scheme. Among such CRPs, about 65 000 are currently valid.

(2) To implement the Scheme in an orderly manner, the governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong agreed to set up for the Scheme an online travel booking system, through which bookings for travel can be made by vehicles issued with a CRP and an electronic vehicle licence from the Mainland authorities. Taking the period from January to June 2024 as an example, the daily average travel booking number was about 1 900, and the highest daily travel booking number was about 5 000 recorded on March 29, 2024 (Friday). The existing arrangement of the Scheme is sufficient for meeting the relevant travel needs. As the booking system undergoes enhancements and modifications from time to time, the TD currently does not have more representative statistical data on the utilisation rate of the quota of bookings. We will continue to monitor closely the travel situation under the Scheme, and keep enhancing the arrangement in a timely manner.

(3) To ensure smooth implementation of the Scheme, the governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong agreed that applicants are required to reserve the specified date and time for travelling of vehicles with the system. Once the applications for booking or cancellations of booking are received, it will take time for the TD to consolidate relevant information for transferring to the computer systems of Hong Kong and Mainland port authorities, so that the relevant authorities will know whether bookings have been made for vehicles under the system to pass through the ports. To allow greater flexibility in travel arrangements, the TD enhanced the booking arrangements since February 2024 by shortening the periods required for travel booking and cancellation of booking, from no less than two and three calendar days respectively to at or before noon on one calendar day before departure. The TD will continue to closely monitor the booking situation of applicants under the Scheme in collaboration with relevant authorities of Hong Kong and the Mainland, and through maintaining close communication with them, implement enhancement measures in a timely manner, with a view to providing citizens with better convenience and travel experience.