

LCQ2: Popularisation of electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 12):

Question:

On promoting the popularisation of electric vehicles (EVs), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that there was only one EV in every 40 vehicles in the government fleet last year, whether it has assessed if the Government, with such a proportion, is able to take the lead in using EVs; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the negative, of the specific measures in place to raise the proportion and the implementation timetable;

(2) given that as mentioned in the funding application submitted to this Council by the Government last month, only "not less than 30 per cent" of the car parking spaces in the two public car parks planned to be built by the Government would be provided with EV charging facilities, whether it has assessed if the Government, with such a proportion, is able to set an example for public car parks operated by the private sector; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the negative, whether it will raise the proportion; and

(3) given that while the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles (the Roadmap) has proposed a number of measures on the popularisation of EVs, quite a number of government officers and private car owners have relayed that they lack the desire to switch to using EVs as ancillary facilities for EVs are inadequate (e.g. only a small number of public car parking spaces are provided with charging facilities, or such spaces are only provided with standard charging facilities), whether it has reviewed if the Roadmap has put forward solutions to address the issues concerned, and provided adequate incentives to make private car owners switch to using EVs expeditiously, so as to meet the target of ceasing the new registration of fuel-propelled private cars in 2035 or earlier?

Reply:

President,

The Government announced in March this year the first Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles (EV Roadmap). The key measures include no new registration of fuel-propelled private cars in 2035 or earlier, proactively promoting trials for electric public transport and commercial vehicles, expanding the electric vehicle (EV) charging network and promoting its marketisation, training for EV professionals, formulating a Producer

Responsibility Scheme for retired EV batteries, establishing a task force to examine the high-end development of new decarbonisation technologies globally, reviewing the strategies and targets of the EV Roadmap roughly every 5 years.

As regards the question raised by the Hon Michael Tien, having consulted the Development Bureau, the Architectural Services Department, the Government Logistics Department, the Housing Department and the Transport Department, my response is as follows:

(1) The Government has been keeping abreast of the latest technological development of EVs and encouraging departments to use EVs in replacing their vehicles due for replacement, subject to the availability of suitable models in the market and their performance in meeting departments' operational needs. As at end-2020, there are 133 EVs among the 1 130 saloon cars in the government fleet (i.e. 1 EV in every 8 saloon cars).

The battery capacity and range of electric cars have been enhancing significantly in the recent years and charging speed is also catching up. This renders electric private cars (e-private cars) suitable for daily use in Hong Kong generally. As more and more relatively affordable e-private cars enter into the local market, to demonstrate the Government's commitment in pushing forward Hong Kong's transition to EVs, we are prepared to switch our vehicle fleet to EVs at a faster pace, and have formulated a new policy to set EV as standard for small and medium government private cars to be procured or replaced, unless there are special circumstances such as operational needs that render the use of EVs infeasible. For other types of vehicles, the use of EVs and other more environmentally friendly vehicles will be accorded priority. Senior government officials will also take the lead in switching their saloon cars to EVs when their cars are replaced.

We will also advance in tandem with the global development in exploring electrification of other types of special purpose vehicles in the government fleet such as refuse collection vehicles and street washing vehicles, and will strike a balance between prudent use of public monies and taking the lead in using EVs.

(2) According to the requirements stipulated in the government circular on "Green Government Buildings", unless it is technically infeasible, all new government buildings should provide medium chargers in not less than 30 per cent of indoor parking spaces. The remaining parking spaces should be equipped with EV charging infrastructure including power supply, cables, distribution boards, switchgears, conduits and trunkings, for the timely installation of chargers at parking spaces subject to the evaluation of needs.

To further enhance charging support, we are planning to update the above-mentioned circular and relevant guidelines, to require all parking spaces for private cars, motorcycles and light goods vehicles within new government buildings to be equipped with medium chargers, unless there are extreme technical constraints. We are working out the details in consultation

with relevant bureaux and departments, for the proposed new amendments to be applicable to future new government buildings.

(3) Tying in with the measures to stop new registration of fuel-propelled private cars in 2035 or earlier, the EV Roadmap has set out strategies to extend the charging network with a multi-pronged approach.

Regarding private charging facilities, the Government's target is to have at least 150 000 parking spaces in private residential and commercial buildings to be equipped with EV charging infrastructure by 2025. To achieve the target, the Government will continue providing gross floor area concessions to car parks of new buildings that have EV charging infrastructure installed. Over 68 000 parking spaces have been approved. Furthermore, the \$2 billion EV-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme subsidises installation of charging infrastructure in car parks of existing private residential buildings. From its launch in October 2020 until now, the scheme has received more than 370 applications, involving over 88 000 private parking spaces.

As for public charging facilities, the Government's target is to have at least 5 000 public chargers provided by both the private and public sectors by 2025, and we plan to double the number in future. The Government has allocated \$120 million to add more than 1 000 medium chargers at government car parks by 2022, bringing the total number of chargers to 1 800. In addition, the consultant engaged by the Government has compiled a list of preliminary potential sites for setting up public quick charging facilities in the 18 districts in Hong Kong early this year and the Government will further study the sites. We will also explore the feasibility of progressively converting some existing petrol and liquefied petroleum gas filling stations to quick charging stations in the medium to long term.

With the ever-growing EV uptake, the Government will progressively marketise EV charging services in order to drive the private sector to provide more customerised EV charging services. Besides, we have extended the deadline of the first registration tax (FRT) concession arrangement for EVs (including the "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme) to March 2024, and raised the FRT concession cap of e-private cars under the "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme from \$250,000 to \$287,500, to promote EV adoption while not giving unintentional impetus to vehicular growth.

We will review the various strategies, measures and progress of the EV Roadmap around every 5 years to keep up with the relevant development, with a view to attaining the vision of "Zero Carbon Emissions" "Clean Air" "Smart City", and the target of zero vehicular emissions before 2050.

Thank you, President.