

LCQ7: Promoting the use of electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Tanya Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

After the Government's reduction of the concessions on the first registration tax for electric private cars (e-PCs) on April 1, 2017, there was a significant drop in the number of first registered e-PCs. On February 28, 2018, the Government introduced a "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme (Replacement Scheme) whereby a vehicle owner who scraps his old private car (PC) that meets the eligibility criteria and buys a new e-PC may enjoy a higher tax concession. On January 28 this year, the Government relaxed the eligibility criteria for the Replacement Scheme. On promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs), will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of (i) the number of registered PCs, and (ii) the number of newly registered e-PCs, at the end of each month from January to October this year;
- (2) of the (i) monthly and (ii) cumulative numbers of applications received and approved respectively, since the launch of the Replacement Scheme on February 28, 2018;
- (3) of the number of PCs, as at January 28 this year when the eligibility criteria for the Replacement Scheme were relaxed, which met the new eligibility criteria; among such PCs, the number and percentage of those which have now been scrapped under the Scheme; the number of PCs meeting the eligibility criteria as at the 1st of this month;
- (4) whether it knows the respective total numbers of (i) standard, (ii) medium and (iii) quick public EV chargers (chargers) throughout the territory as at the 1st of this month, with a breakdown by District Council district;
- (5) as the Financial Secretary has indicated in this financial year's Budget that it will allocate \$120 million to extend the public EV charging networks in government car parks, of the respective numbers of (i) standard, (ii) medium and (iii) quick chargers it has planned to install, with a breakdown by name of car park;
- (6) whether it will make provision for setting up a dedicated fund for the installation of EV charging-enabling infrastructure in the public car parks under the Hong Kong Housing Authority, including the installation of more chargers and the replacement of the existing standard chargers by medium or quick chargers; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (7) whether it will ask the MTR Corporation Limited to provide a certain

number of chargers in each of its park-and-ride (PnR) car parks, so as to facilitate EV drivers' participation in the PnR Schemes; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(8) as the Government has planned to allocate \$2 billion for launching a pilot scheme to subsidise the installation of EV charging-enabling infrastructure in car parks of eligible existing private residential buildings, and estimated that about 60 000 car parking spaces will be benefited, but as there were only about 12 000 EVs in the territory as at August this year, whether the Government has put in place measures to encourage vehicle owners of the car parks concerned to switch to e-PCs as soon as possible, so as to avoid wastage of resources?

Reply:

President,

On February 28, 2018, the Government introduced the "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme (Replacement Scheme) to incentivise owners of private cars (PCs) to opt for electric vehicles (EVs) when they need to replace their old PCs. Under the Replacement Scheme, PC owners who scrap and de-register their eligible old PCs and then first register new electric PCs (e-PC) will enjoy a higher first registration tax (FRT) concession up to \$250 000.

To strike a better balance between promoting wider use of EVs and not increasing the overall number of PCs, the Government, after examining the views of the public on the Replacement Scheme, announced on January 28, 2019 that two of the three eligibility criteria for 'Old PC' would be relaxed with immediate effect:

(i) Ownership period: revised from the PC owner must have been the registered owner of the Old PC for "three years or more", without interruption, immediately prior to its de-registration to "18 months or more"; and

(ii) Licensed period: revised from the "Old PC", with or without interruption, must have been licensed for at least 20 months (i.e. 608 days or more) within the 24 months immediately before its de-registration to the 'Old PC', with or without interruption, must have been licensed for at least 10 months (i.e. 304 days or more) within the 12 months immediately before its de-registration.

Regarding the criteria of vehicle age, the requirement of "the 'Old PC' must have been first registered in Hong Kong for at least six years" remains unchanged.

Having consulted relevant bureaux and departments, my reply to the question raised by the Hon Tanya Chan is as follows:

(1) Relevant monthly figures on registered PCs and e-PCs from January to October 2019 are tabulated below:

As at the End of	Total Number of Registered PCs (Total Number of Registered e-PCs)	Number of First Registered PCs (Number of First Registered e-PCs)
January	618 888 (11 130)	3 478 (51)
February	619 654 (11 166)	2 529 (37)
March	620 752 (11 237)	3 314 (80)
April	621 648 (11 276)	2 967 (44)
May	622 840 (11 430)	3 568 (158)
June	623 908 (11 519)	3 392 (94)
July	624 869 (11 622)	3 403 (106)
August	625 658 (11 773)	3 257 (155)
September	626 037 (12 341)	3 116 (571)
October	626 405 (12 650)	2 893 (314)

Note: Government vehicles not included.

(2) Upon the launch of the Replacement Scheme, the Transport Department (TD) received 1 844 applications in total as at October 31, 2019. Among these applications, 1 785 have been approved, 42 are being processed and 17 have been rejected for not meeting eligibility criteria. Details are tabulated below:

Figures on Applications under the Replacement Scheme

Month	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved
2018		
February	0	0
March	11	11
April	28	27
May	13	14
June	28	24
July	12	13
August	41	33
September	44	47
October	48	49(Note)
November	49	50
December	55	55
2019		
January	47	44
February	22	22
March	54	56
April	66	42
May	129	147
June	85	78

July	99	109
August	146	126
September	545	524
October	322	314
Total	1 844	1 785

Note: Including one case of withdrawal after approval of application.

(3) Since the corresponding computer system of the TD does not possess the statistical function to calculate the cumulative licensed period of PCs, the Government can provide neither the number of old PCs fulfilling all three requirements of the Replacement Scheme nor the number of old PCs scrapped under the Replacement Scheme.

Besides, from January 28, 2019 to October 31, 2019, a total of 1 385 e-PCs were first registered under the Replacement Scheme, accounting for around 80 per cent of the cumulative approved applications since the launch of the Replacement Scheme.

(4) The respective figures on public EV chargers (including those provided at the Government and non-governmental car parks) as at the end of September 2019 are tabulated below by districts.

District	Number of Chargers			
	Standard	Medium	Quick	Sub-total
Central and Western	62	110	36	208
Eastern	28	65	50	143
Southern	4	12	29	45
Wan Chai	66	121	37	224
Kowloon City	64	7	15	86
Kwun Tong	240	81	54	375
Sham Shui Po	17	104	71	192
Wong Tai Sin	24	46	11	81
Yau Tsim Mong	111	124	76	311
Kwai Tsing	25	13	33	71
Tsuen Wan	17	49	12	78
Sai Kung	24	37	25	86
North	58	25	12	95
Tai Po	28	3	7	38
Sha Tin	75	51	47	173
Yuen Long	50	33	18	101
Tuen Mun	12	10	17	39
Islands	18	115	27	160
Total	923	1006	577	2506

(5) The Government has allocated \$120 million to expand the public EV charging network at government car parks in the coming three years. We plan to install over 1 000 medium chargers at car parks fully or partially open to the public under the TD, Government Property Agency, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and Tourism Commission. Details are at the Annex.

(6) As recommended by the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will continue to provide EV chargers at 30 per cent of PC-parking spaces in indoor car parks of newly built public housing developments. As for the remaining 70 per cent of PC-parking spaces, the HA will also install EV charging-enabling infrastructure (including distribution boxes, cables, conduits and trunkings) and reserve spaces for the installation of EV chargers as needed in future. Regarding outdoor car parks, although there is no recommendation made in the HKPSG on the provision of charging facilities, the HA will reserve sufficient power supply and underground ducts at outdoor parking spaces for the installation of charging facilities in future.

The HA is proactively studying the impact of providing medium chargers in newly built public housing developments on the overall design of their power supply systems, and will strive to install EV charging facilities in accordance with relevant Government guidelines for EV charging and the HKPSG.

For its existing car parks, the HA will provide, on demand and where technically feasible, EV charging facilities for monthly parking spaces without such facilities. Moreover, the HA has conducted a feasibility study on the addition of medium chargers at hourly parking spaces of existing HA car parks, and will retrofit medium chargers at some of these spaces if existing electricity loading permits. To ensure optimum use of resources, the HA will carry out the retrofitting works in phases and consider gradually increasing the number of medium chargers in suitable existing HA car parks according to the utilisation of the chargers.

(7) We wrote to various corporations including the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited (MTRCL) in November 2017, inviting them to install medium and quick EV chargers in their car parks, as well as upgrade their existing standard chargers to medium ones. The MTRCL replied in December the same year, stating that they would support the Government's policy of promoting the wider use of EVs. The MTRCL has started carrying out related works and devising planning. The Environmental Protection Department will continue to work with various corporations, including the MTRCL, to collaboratively advance the work concerned.

(8) To encourage PC owners to switch to EVs, the Government has implemented various measures over the past few years, including offering first registration tax concessions, introducing the Replacement Scheme, granting concessions on gross floor area for EV charging-enabling car parks in new buildings, expanding the public EV charging network, and establishing dedicated team and hotline to provide relevant information and technical support in setting up chargers.

Whether EV charging facilities can be installed at private residential parking spaces is one of the key considerations for PC owners switching to EVs. To further promote the steady development and popularisation of EVs in Hong Kong, the Government has earmarked \$2 billion to launch a pilot scheme to subsidise existing private residential building car parks meeting prescribed criteria to install EV charging-enabling infrastructure. As a preliminary estimate, the subsidy scheme can provide about 60 000 existing private residential parking spaces to equip with the charging-enabling infrastructure within about three years.

With the gradual technological advancement of e-PCs, more affordable e-PCs models with a long driving range are now available in the market. We therefore expect that the number of e-PCs will continue to grow. The abovementioned pilot scheme is a forward-looking measure to cater for the popularisation of e-PCs. Upon the launch of the scheme, we will review its progress and effectiveness in a timely manner in order to keep up with the development of promoting the use of EVs.