

Public consultation on Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers commences

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (February 22) released a consultation paper on the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers (PPRS) for the proper and effective management of waste plastic beverage containers. The consultation period will last for three months until May 21, 2021.

An EPD spokesman said, "The Government has recently announced the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035. With the vision of 'Waste Reductionâ€§Resources Circulationâ€§Zero Landfill', the Blueprint sets out the strategies, goals and measures to tackle the challenge of waste management up to 2035, and to promote a circular economy and green living environment. As one of the key waste reduction measures, the proposed PPRS requires the relevant stakeholders to jointly share the environmental responsibilities of collecting and treating plastic beverage containers to minimise their impact on the environment. This is also conducive to the development of the local circular economy. Plastic beverage containers are usually made up of mono-material which is relatively easy to handle and has a higher recycling value. If properly separated at source for collection and treatment, such material can be turned into useful resources more effectively."

In line with the "polluter pays" principle, the PPRS proposed a recycling levy to be collected at the beverage supplier level (including manufacturers and importers) to help recover the operation costs of the Scheme. It has been suggested that certain retail stores selling plastic-bottled beverages serve as collection points to enable the public to return used plastic beverage containers. The plastic beverage containers collected will then be supplied to local recyclers for proper recycling, turning the containers into marketable recycled materials. Furthermore, the proposed PPRS includes the provision of rebates to encourage the public to return used plastic beverage containers.

Members of the public are welcome to submit their views through the dedicated website at www.pprs.hk, or by email, post or fax to the EPD during consultation period.

Meanwhile, the EPD has rolled out a one-year Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) Pilot Scheme to test the application of RVMs in recovering plastic beverage containers in the local context, paving the way for the future implementation of the PPRS. Under the pilot scheme, 60 RVMs will be set up in phases at locations such as public places and government facilities with suitable foot traffic to collect used plastic beverage containers returned by the public for recycling. This will provide an instant rebate of \$0.1 via e-payment platforms for each plastic beverage container properly returned to

the RVM. Each e-payment platform account will allow the return of a maximum 30 plastic beverage containers a day. Members of the public may also choose to donate the rebate (no daily limit imposed) to designated charities (the Community Chest, the Scout Association of Hong Kong or the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association) to benefit the community.

At present, 40 RVMs are in service, with the remaining 20 RVMs to be available soon. The locations and service hours of the RVMs are available at www.hkrvm.com.hk. For enquiries and views on the operation of the RVMs, members of the public can call the pilot scheme hotline at 9488 0277 or email to enquiry@hkrvm.com.hk.