

SEN's opening remarks at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee this afternoon (April 6):

Chairman,

This year, the Financial Secretary's Budget has allocated over \$13 billion to the Environment Bureau (ENB) for two key areas, namely, enhancing environmental protection and providing financial relief to the relevant sectors.

First, in respect of enhancing environmental protection, the Budget proposes allocating more than \$10 billion to implement various measures. One of them is that we will support the green transformation of vehicles by formulating Hong Kong's first roadmap for the popularisation of electric vehicles (EVs) and rolling out the following measures:

- * launch a \$2 billion pilot scheme to subsidise the installation of EV charging-enabling infrastructure in car parks of private residential buildings;
- * set aside \$80 million to launch a pilot scheme for electric public light buses;
- * earmark \$350 million to launch a pilot scheme for electric ferries; and
- * earmark \$7.1 billion for the ex-gratia payment scheme which aims to phase out about 40,000 Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles.

Other measures related to environmental protection include the following:

- * set up a \$200 million Green Tech Fund to support the research and development, as well as application, of decarbonisation and green technologies;
- * earmark not less than \$300 million each year to stabilise the recycling volume and the price of local waste paper; and
- * encourage Hong Kong-owned factories to adopt cleaner production technologies with a view to improving the regional environment. \$300 million has been earmarked to extend the Cleaner Production Partnership Programme.

Moreover, in view of the current fight against the pandemic, the Budget has put extra funding of more than \$3 billion under the ENB to extend the relief measures announced last year. These measures include the following:

* increase funding by about \$2.9 billion to extend the validity period of the electricity subsidy for non-residential customers from four months to eight months;

* increase funding by about \$120 million to extend the sewage charge waiver period for non-domestic accounts from four to eight months;

* extend the rental reduction waiver of 50 per cent for eligible tenants of the EcoPark, country park refreshment kiosks and the Hong Kong Wetland Park for another six months until this September; and

* extend the rental support scheme for the recycling industry from six months to one year through allocating additional funding of \$100 million from the Recycling Fund. In addition, the Recycling Fund will allocate another \$100 million to support the recycling industry in its fight against the pandemic.

Today, my colleagues and I are happy to listen to the Honourable Members' views and respond to questions.

Thank you, Chairman.