

Thirty-four groups of waivers/concessions of government fees and charges to be extended for another year to benefit wide range of sectors

The Government will publish in the Gazette on May 20 the extension of 34 groups of existing waivers/concessions of government fees and charges for one more year to give effect to the measure announced in the 2022-23 Budget. The waivers/concessions will be implemented progressively from October this year, benefiting a wide range of sectors from aviation, maritime, logistics, agriculture and fisheries, retail, catering, construction to tourism and entertainment. The extension is estimated to reduce government revenue by about \$1.7 billion.

The 34 groups of waivers/concessions of government fees and charges were introduced by the Government progressively from October 2019 for one year to ease the operating pressure of businesses in the face of economic downturn and then the epidemic, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises. In view of the ongoing impact of the epidemic, the measure had twice been extended for one year. Among the waivers/concessions and beneficiaries of this round for 2022-23 are:

- (1) extending the waivers of licence and examination fees of commercial vehicles until December 29, 2023, benefiting more than 170 000 commercial vehicle owners;
- (2) extending the waivers of closed road permit fees until December 29, 2023, benefiting operators of around 13 000 cross-boundary goods vehicles, buses and hire cars;
- (3) extending the waivers of licence fees of hawkers, restaurants, fresh provision shops, food factories, factory canteens, bakeries, and more, until September 30, 2023, benefiting around 39 000 licensees;
- (4) extending the waivers of trade effluent surcharges until December 31, 2023, benefiting around 34 000 businesses, mainly those from the food manufacturing and catering sectors;
- (5) extending the waivers and reduction of registration fees of minor works contractors and electrical contractors/workers until October 20, 2023, and September 30, 2023, respectively, benefiting around 19 000 minor works contractors and 101 000 electrical contractors/workers; and
- (6) extending the waivers of port facilities and light dues until September 30, 2023, and permit to remain fees until October 31, 2023, benefiting operators of around 180 000 arrivals of ocean-going vessels, high speed crafts and river-trade vessels.

Furthermore, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) will further extend the waiving of registration and renewal fees of construction workers for a year until September 30, 2023. This will benefit around 120 000 construction workers. The estimated revenue forgone to the CIC is about \$9 million.

Details of the waivers/concessions of fees and charges are summarised at the Annex.

The Government will submit the related subsidiary legislation to the Legislative Council on May 25 for negative vetting.