

Transcript of remarks by SEE at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, at a media session after attending a meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs of the Legislative Council today (November 28):

Reporter: Mr Tse, can you recap in English on why a new penalty mechanism only apply to the CLP Yuen Long incident but not the power outage by Hong Kong Electric? And also both firms refuse to lower the maximum cover level, can you tell us, will the Government push these two companies again to lower the level? Thank you.

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology: In this interim review, we have sought the two companies (CLP Power Hong Kong Limited and The Hongkong Electric Company Limited) to agree to three major changes to the Scheme of Control Agreements. One is that during the energy crisis, they will introduce a special subsidy scheme to alleviate those who are the most needed. I think that is a good tool. That means the two power companies agreed that they have to take up certain social responsibilities. The second one is that we have introduced a new penalty mechanism in case of major power interruption cases. We have introduced what we call a Customer Interruption Duration (CID). If they exceed certain level there will be a penalty. I think this is also a breakthrough because all along we have used bonus to encourage them to perform better in terms of stability, in terms of the speed of restoring electricity supply, etc. But this (CID) is a new concept. If they run into a major interruption situation, then there will be a penalty. And with the introduction of this system, for the case of power cable incident of CLP Power Hong Kong Limited in Yuen Long last year, the mechanism will come in, and there will be a penalty if the same happens in future. For the case of the Hong Kong Electric happened earlier, because for most of the customers, the interruption affected was relatively short, in terms of the duration. Therefore it would not trigger this new penalty mechanism. However, for that particular case, our concern is whether there is human error involved causing that interruption. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department will investigate into the case under the Electricity Ordinance. That is outside the Scheme of Control Agreements mechanism but we will look into that.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)