

Transcript of remarks by SEN

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, on the Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme at a media session after attending a radio programme this morning (October 21):

Reporter: Can I ask you a few English questions? You have just talked about the review on the plastic bag levy. Why have you decided to look into this issue? Is it because of the misuse of the plastic bags?

Secretary for the Environment: The Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme has been in Hong Kong for a decade. I think it is time to review it. On the one hand, it is effective. Compared with the number of the concerned bags used before the scheme, there is already about a 50 per cent reduction in the total number. But when we compare with other cities in Asia, their latest schemes are more aggressive, in terms of charging level and also the limitations on exempt items. So I think it is time to review the regulation in order to reduce single-use plastics. It is about the total quantity of plastics in landfills. And also compared with other cities in the world, reducing disposable plastics is a global trend. So I think Hong Kong should catch up.

Reporter: So there is room to tighten this policy even further?

Secretary for the Environment: I think we would consult the public and as said there are two major areas – the tightening level and also the scope of exemptions. So there is enough information for the Government to talk to the public to further reduce the use of plastics.

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