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Wong Kam Shing – GOLD BAUHINIA STAR, awarded forwhat ?



Department of Justice **Bilingual Laws Information System**
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MANDATORY SOURCE SEPARATION LEGISLATION



WASTE RECYCLING LEGISLATION

Unactioned

ZERO WASTE POLICY

Unactioned

South China Morning Post 南華早報

Straight to landfill? Why Hong Kong is recycling less of your rubbish

PUBLISHED : Friday, 18 September, 2015, 2:30am

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Lifestyle

Alan Yu life@scmp.com

Even as Hong Kong landfills are rapidly running out of space, the city's recycling levels are decreasing

For years, Christina Jang has been conscientiously sorting the plastic bottles, aluminium cans and recyclable paper from her rubbish and placing them in the appropriate bins for recycling. But last summer, a cleaning lady in her building opened her eyes to what really happened to the materials that were supposed to be recycled.

"While she was collecting from the bin, I happened to take the recycling down and I asked her how I should sort my trash. She said you don't need to do any sorting because it all goes in the trash anyway," Jang says. "I was very angry because I had been sorting my trash, thinking that [we] were recycling everything and now you're telling me it's all a sham."

The property managers for her building couldn't give a satisfactory answer either.

Despite the discouraging response, Jang, a career coach and environmental consultant in her 40s, continues to separate her rubbish.

[Read more: Street cleaners send waste for recycling to landfills \[1\]](#)

"I realised that it'll be worse if I don't sort my trash. I believe that consumers' voices do matter because if we don't do it, then no one will."

There have long been complaints about cleaners mixing trash and recyclable materials, all of which ends up in landfills: in 2013 the SCMP filmed government contract workers doing just that in Causeway Bay and Wan Chai, and residents have regularly reported similar incidents with rubbish disposal.

That is why, since last year, government contractors have been required to use clearly labelled plastic bags for recyclable materials so everyone can keep an eye on them, says Wong Hon-meng, an assistant director at the Environmental Protection Department.

But both the recycling sector and environment officials acknowledge the problem goes beyond cleaners not handling trash properly: it's hard to make money from recycling materials and the costs of sorting and transporting recyclables can far exceed what companies earn from selling the materials.

[Read more: Hong Kong's first e-waste plant to be built by German recycling firm under multimillion-dollar deal \[2\]](#)

The city just doesn't make it worthwhile to recycle and this is creating a pressing issue - Hong Kong's propensity for generating more trash is matched by the declining capacity of its landfills.

A 2013 report by the department estimates that all three landfills in the New Territories will be full by 2019. The report also shows that Hong Kong produces more rubbish each day compared to nearby cities at a similar level of development: each person in the Tokyo metropolitan area generates about 0.77kg of trash daily compared 1kg per day for a Taipei resident, while Hongkongers top them all by each producing 1.36kg per day. The department hopes to reduce the amount thrown out by each person to 0.8kg per day by 2022.

But even as policymakers have taken to warning in recent years how Hong Kong landfills are rapidly running out of space, the city is recycling increasingly less of its rubbish: the amount that is processed and reused has declined from 52 per cent in 2010 to 37 per cent in 2013.



This may improve as the government gears up to introduce rubbish disposal charges for households and businesses, with a series of public briefings in June.

A panel of the government-appointed Council for Sustainable Development last year proposed fees of up to 39 cents per kg under a pay-as-you-throw scheme; based on estimates that one person generates about 1.27kg of waste per day, the bill for a three-person household would come up to HK\$44 each month.



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In 2014 the government also committed HK\$1 billion for a new fund to help upgrade technology and infrastructure in the recycling sector and an advisory panel was set up in August to guide its operation.

Because Hong Kong has few of the factories and farms that could utilise waste plastic and compost (from food waste), most of its recycled material is exported, says Wong of the department.

[Read more: Hong Kong issues dire warning on landfills amid protests by residents \[3\]](#)

This means local recyclers' earnings are heavily dependent on the global prices of oil, plastic and other commodities. If it's cheaper to buy new plastic, manufacturers will naturally ignore recycled material.

Wong says the new fund will help recycling companies adopt modern technologies that may bring in a more stable source of revenue, for example, by converting waste oil into biodiesel.

Jacky Lau Yiu-shing, chief director of the Hong Kong Recycle Materials and Reproduction Business General Association, believes an economic incentive should boost recycling rates.

"If the trash isn't worth anything, then no one will sort it for you. Most cleaners don't get paid to recycle; property management companies have to placate the Environmental Protection Department so they'll order cleaners to recycle, but the stuff isn't worth much money," he says. "It's a vicious cycle: you can't get any money from recycling, and the people on the front lines don't get paid."

The thing about roadside bins is, there's no money to be had in recycling ... contractors have to go all over Hong Kong [to collect waste] so the logistics is quite expensive
Jacky Lau Yiu-shing, chief director of the Hong Kong Recycle Materials and Reproduction Business General Association

Lau, who runs recycler Lau Choi Kee Papers Co, says a lot of paper and aluminium (mostly drink cans) are recycled because there is a well-established market for those materials; but that's not the case for plastic.

As a result, paper makes up 52 per cent of all recycled matter while plastics comprise just 12 per cent, even though both materials each account for about 19 per cent of waste generated in Hong Kong.

Moreover, Lau says government contractors are often forced to dump contents collected from roadside recycling bins with other trash because they are heavily contaminated with things such as half-eaten meals and cigarette butts.

[Read more: Hong Kong's woeful recycling efforts a result of mistrust in the system and lack of government support for the industry \[4\]](#)

"The thing about roadside bins is, there's no money to be had in recycling ... contractors have to go all over Hong Kong [to collect waste] so the logistics is quite expensive and they won't really do the separation for you; all they'll do is collect the trash and send it to another company. We [recyclers] have to pay them, so if the trash is too contaminated, then we won't take it."

Meanwhile, the recycling sector is going through a tough patch because the market for recycled materials isn't very good; it's also tiring and dirty work, Lau says, so very few young people want to enter the industry, with the youngest workers already in their 40s.

Alfred Wong perhaps presents new prospects for recycling. The 27-year-old Wong is general manager of HK Recycles, which he describes as a logistics rather than recycling business.



The company, which was set up in 2012 by two socially minded entrepreneurs, Brian Mak and Mike Shum, has been able to recycle almost 90 per cent of the trash collected from some 600 clients, including office buildings and property management companies.

Wong says the key to how it has been able to recycle so much is simple: HK Recycles runs workshops and seminars for clients on how to separate their waste before collecting recyclable materials from them. Fees are charged to cover the cost of moving the recyclable materials to companies that do the processing.

HK Recycles is able to collect clean and well-sorted recyclable materials because their collectors talk to clients and offer tips on what can and cannot be recycled (drink cartons, for example, are not suitable). And the task is made easier by issuing zippered heavy-duty plastic bags prominently labelled for glass, paper, plastic and metal.

Wong says there has been so much interest in HK Recycles services that they have had to take down the fee listing on its webpage. (Households are typically charged HK\$39 for a weekly collection and offices between HK\$100 and HK\$200. There are also monthly corporate packages that include recycling data and workshops for between HK\$500 and HK\$1,000.) Even so, there are 400 to 500 potential clients on their waiting list.

"The industry complains that people don't know how to sort and how to recycle, but from our experience, that's actually not true," Alfred Wong says.

Details have yet to emerge on the government's new recycling fund but Wong wonders how effective it can be if local recycling contractors prove reluctant to modernise their operations.



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Many companies conceded in a Hong Kong Productivity Council report last year that collection is inefficient and expensive because they must pay to pick up the recyclable materials from various districts. Yet none of the recycling companies that Wong spoke to expressed any interest when he outlined the HK Recycles business model and the software used to track and gather data about their operations.

"The fear that I have for this recycling fund is ... if recyclers are not willing to improve their operations, then it's kind of pointless."

Things you can do

Following a successful inaugural Zero Waste Week in June, environmental campaigners have added a Zero Waste corporate challenge to the programmes rolling out under the annual Hong Kong Clean-up event.

Now in its 15th year, the clean-up drive starts tomorrow and runs until November 1. Last year, 51,064 volunteers collected 3,894 tonnes of rubbish from across Hong Kong.

Volunteers can sign up for the clean-up challenge that best fits their interests and schedules.

City Clean-up: with tips from an online toolkit, families, schools and offices can find easy ways to trim back what they throw out.

Country Clean-up: nature lovers may prefer to help by collecting rubbish left along hiking trails and in country parks, which spoil our enjoyment of the natural world.

Coastal Clean-up: many groups have organised rewarding days out helping to clear up marine debris, especially plastic, which is a constant blight on the city's beaches.

Lisa Christensen and Nissa Marion initiated the Zero Waste event three months ago to encourage Hongkongers to reduce the amount of rubbish sent to landfills by using fewer disposable items and recycling resources. And with the corporate challenge, they hope to focus business efforts by helping them set targets and come up with comprehensive solutions.

For more details, visit hkcleanup.org [5] or email info@HKcleanup.org [6]

More on this:

[Hong Kong issues dire warning on landfills amid protests by residents](#) [3]

[Street cleaners send waste for recycling to landfills](#) [1]

[Hong Kong's first e-waste plant to be built by German recycling firm under multimillion-dollar deal](#) [2]

Source URL: <http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/1859106/why-hong-kong-recycling-less-its-rubbish-time-goes>

Links

[1] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1192599/street-cleaners-send-waste-recycling-landfills>

[2] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/1790188/german-firm-will-run-first-e-waste-plant>

[3] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1246229/city-could-drown-trash-environment-minister-warns>



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[4] <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1859345/hong-kongs-woeful-recycling-efforts-result-mistrust-system>

[5] <http://hkcleanup.org>

[6] <mailto:info@HKcleanup.org>

Revealed: the toxic trail of e-waste that leads from the US to Hong Kong

SCMP study of 10 dumping sites shows how shipments from the world's biggest producer of electronic garbage are despoiling the New Territories and raising serious health and safety issues

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South China Morning Post 南華早報

Landmark study of elderly Hongkongers ties air pollution to multiple types of cancer

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News>Hong Kong>Health & Environment

AIR POLLUTION

Ernest Kao and Emily Tsang

Research involving over 66,000 participants finds increased exposure to particulate matter raises health risks

Every 10 micrograms per cubic metre of increased exposure to tiny particulates in the air increases the risk of elderly Hongkongers dying from some kind of cancer by 22 per cent, a decade-long study by British and Hong Kong researchers has found.

While the links between particulate pollution and cardiopulmonary disease and lung cancer have been well-documented, the joint study was one of few to be published that highlighted an association with mortality from other cancers.

Researchers at the University of Birmingham in the UK and the University of Hong Kong recruited 66,280 people aged 65 or older between 1998 and 2001, and followed their mortality outcomes up to 2011. Causes of death were ascertained based on Hong Kong registrations.

Annual concentrations of fine particulates in their area of residence were estimated using data from satellites and fixed-site monitors.

Fine particulates, or PM2.5, are hazardous airborne particles measuring less than 2.5 microns in diameter and small enough to enter the lungs.

About 4,740 tonnes of PM2.5 are emitted annually into the city's air. Around half comes from marine or road transport and about a tenth from power generation.

The study found that every 10 micrograms per cubic metre of PM2.5 was associated with a 42 per cent higher risk of dying from cancer of the upper digestive tract and a 35 per cent higher



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risk of dying from cancers of accessory digestive organs such as the liver, bile ducts, gall bladder, and pancreas.

[Where in China can you find the worst air pollution? You might be surprised ...](#) [1]

The risks were found to differ between men and women. For women, the stated increase in PM2.5 exposure heightened their risk of dying from breast cancer by 80 per cent; in men, the same PM increase corresponded to a 36 per cent higher risk of dying of lung cancer.

The study was recently published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, a journal of the [American Association for Cancer Research](#) [2], and deepened growing concern around the health risks of long-term PM2.5 exposure.

Dr Neil Thomas of the University of Birmingham's [Institute of Applied Health](#) [3] called air pollution a clear and modifiable public health concern. "The implications for other similar cities around the world are that PM2.5 must be reduced as much and as fast as possible," he said.

He said the next step was to determine whether other countries experience similar associations between PM2.5 and cancer deaths. "This study ... suggests that other urban populations may carry the same risks," he said.

Researcher Dr Thuan Quoc Thach of HKU's school of public health reiterated that pollution was just one risk factor for cancer. Others such as diet and exercise were "more significant and modifiable risk factors", he noted.

[Hong Kong indoor air pollution so bad it could be making you chronically ill, tests show](#) [4]

The [Environmental Protection Department](#) [5] said the city's overall air quality had been improving the past few years with ambient PM2.5 concentrations dropping by 24 per cent between 2011 and last year. It said roadside concentrations dropped over the same period by 21 per cent.

It also said improvements stemmed from effective local air quality measures targeting vehicles, marine vessels and power plants as well as the gradual enhancement of air quality in the Pearl River Delta region.

The [World Health Organisation](#) [6] stipulated 25 and 10 micrograms per cubic metre as the respective safe limits for 24-hour and annual concentrations. However, Hong Kong's limits were less stringent at 75 and 35, respectively.

[Coughing much? Hong Kong suffers bigger rise in poisonous ozone pollution than industrial Guangdong](#) [7]

[Clean Air Network](#) [8] chief executive Patrick Fung Kin-wai said the report highlighted the need to pull Hong Kong's air quality objectives closer to Who standards to safeguard public health.

"A major source of PM2.5 is traffic, but as we can see, the number of private cars continues to grow," he said. "While Hong Kong faces an ageing population, there have not been any major breakthroughs in transport policy or planning that can keep up."

The department has commenced a review of its Air Quality Objectives, but any changes to them would not be seen until 2019, according to the department's timeline.



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Public policy think tank Civic Exchange welcomed the study and urged the government to consider other urban planning options to improve wind circulation and to provide more urban open space. Tailpipe solutions, it said, were only practical quick fixes.

A joint-study by the think tank and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology last year showed that PM2.5 concentrations and their associated health risks were highest in poorly ventilated urban street canyons of Hong Kong.

Dr Stephen Chan-lam, an associate professor of oncology at Chinese University of Hong Kong, described the findings as highly significant, saying they finally provided sound evidence linking air pollution to multiple cancers.

“There’s enough evidence for the government to seriously tackle air pollution,” Chan said.

Topics:

Hong Kong air pollution

Source URL: <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/1941140/landmark-study-elderly-hongkongers-ties-air>

Links

[1] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1937381/where-china-can-you-find-worst-air-pollution-you-might>

[2] <http://www.aacr.org/Pages/Home.aspx>

[3] <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/applied-health/index.aspx>

[4] <http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/health-beauty/article/1935398/hong-kong-indoor-air-pollution-so-bad-it-could-be-making-you>

[5] <http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/top.html>

[6] <http://www.who.int/en/>

[7] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/1899787/coughing-much-hong-kong-suffers-bigger-rise-poisonous-ozone>

[8] <http://www.hongkongcan.org/eng/>

Community & Education • [Environment & Health](#) • Hong Kong

Sludge facility contractor Veolia begins HK\$2 billion legal proceedings against gov’t

24 May 2016 18:21

Howard Winn

9 min read

By HowardWinnReports.com

Hong Kong’s Secretary for the Environment, Wong Kam-sing, spoke with pride at the official opening of the HK\$5.5 billion state of the art Sludge Treatment Facilities (STF) last week. The facilities are to be renamed in less malodorous terms as the T Park with the T standing for transformation. “It signifies Hong Kong’s dedication to ‘transforming’ waste into energy, which is a key part in the waste management strategy for Hong Kong,” Wong said at the opening ceremony at which Chief Executive CY Leung officiated.



Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, explained that the “T” in T-PARK stands for “transformation”.
Photo: GovHK.

But one aspect of this world class project Wong did not elaborate on is that Veolia, the main contractor, that built the STF, has started legal proceedings against the Hong Kong government to recover HK\$2 billion in cost overruns associated with the project. Mediation proceedings are expected to start soon.

South China Morning Post 南華早報

Three-colour recycle bins are window dressing and a sham

PUBLISHED : Thursday, 02 April, 2015, 5:02pm

UPDATED : Thursday, 02 April, 2015, 5:02pm

Comment > Letters

Tom Yam

I refer to the letter by Wong Hon-meng, assistant director, Environmental Protection Department ("Promoting recycling and waste reduction are top priorities", March 23).

He claims that by 2022, Hong Kong will reduce its per capita waste generated by 40 per cent.

How has the department come up with this percentage? Most likely it has simply copied statistics from Taipei and Seoul where a 40 per cent reduction was achieved after waste charging took effect. But those cities developed comprehensive measures to sort and separate waste before they implemented waste charging, as pointed out in my letter ("Waste charge futile without separation of rubbish at source", February 24).

The three-colour recycling bins are window dressing and a sham: only 700 tonnes of recyclables are collected every year, less than 0.02 per cent of the waste produced in Hong Kong. Operated by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, a clear accounting is yet to be published on how the collected waste is being disposed.

The department still does not have correct data as to how much waste is being recycled, having admitted previous figures were wrong, double counting recycled waste shipped to the mainland with that in transit through Hong Kong from overseas.

The HK\$1 billion Recycling Fund Wong mentions is more window dressing. It is 3.5 per cent of the HK\$29 billion budget for the incinerator and landfills expansion.

The proposed community education and recycling centres to be built in the 18 districts are handouts to pro-government environmental groups and subsidies to companies that collect recycled waste and ship it to the mainland, where 90 per cent of Hong Kong's recycled waste ends up.

Despite talking about "policy" and "campaign", the department has no intention of truly pursuing a recycling policy as many countries have.



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There is no policy to develop a sustainable indigenous recycling industry, no statutory requirement nor public education on how to separate waste at source. Despite the many so-called inspection trips overseas by senior officials, paid for by taxpayers' money, no insight and plan were presented on how other countries promote and implement effective recycling.

Given the above, it is ironic that Hong Kong will be hosting an international conference on solid waste management in May. Environment Secretary Wong Kam-sing will be the keynote speaker. What is he going to say?

Tom Yam, Lantau

Source URL: <http://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/1754247/three-colour-recycle-bins-are-window-dressing-and-sham>

<http://news.cleartheair.org.hk/?p=8983>

29th December 2015

Dear Hon Members, [See the 'real' landfill life numbers if we remove the food waste content](#)

Of course if we remove the daily food waste from the landfill equation by using the industrial-garburate-to-sewer option (as recommended by CIWEM UK), here are the numbers:

3,600 m³ food waste per day x 365 = 1,314,000 tonnes per annum that does not need to go to landfill (+ resultant methane production + venting + piping)

Using the data below of current 5.1 million tonnes MSW per annum to landfill and deducting the food waste leaves 3.786 million tonnes per year to landfill; yet that is if No Zero Waste or source separation measures or local increased recycling are taken by Government ENB (which of course means they are not doing their job)

We currently (should) have 37 million cubic meters capacity at our landfills without the extensions already approved so, @3.786 million tonnes per annum we would have 9.77 years before the 3 landfills, without any extensions, are full.

Adding the already approved 3 landfill extensions (111 million m³) + current 37 million m³ =

148 million m³ = 39 years of landfill capacity
3.786

Three bio digesters are planned (at great expense) but the higher quality food waste from malls could be diverted from the industrial-garburate-sewer system to the bio digesters. Using wet market food waste @ 90% water content at the bio digesters would be a disaster and burn more electricity than could be generated, let alone the resultant fish food poor unsaleable quality.

The Panel should demand an independent study of the landfill figures to see whether our figures are ballpark or not. Either way, the current provided figures and landfills' supposed expiry dates do not add up.

Kind regards,

James Middleton

Chairman

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The 'Real' Landfill capacity numbers

dynamco Dec 29th 2015 11:16am Online comment

HK's 3 landfills capacity new(million m3) from published figures

SENT 43

NENT 35

WENT 61

Total 139m m3 capacity

MSW received @approx 13,800 tpd @1.1 tonnes per m3/with landfill efficiency 90% = $13800/1.1/0.9/365 = 5.1\text{m m3 filled /year since 1995}$

$20 \times 5.1 = 102\text{m m3 used up leaves } 37\text{m m3 current space}$

Add already approved landfill extensions:

SENT 15

NENT 25

WENT 71

Total 111m m3

gives us $37+111 = 148\text{ million m3 remaining capacity}$

W/O incineration W/O Zero waste policies = remaining landfill life of $148 / 5.1\text{million per year} = 29\text{ years}$, **which seriously conflicts with Govt doom –gloom 'figures' & its flawed reasoning for the 'need' for an incinerator**

1 incinerator processing 3000 T/day will reduce 1.1 million Te/year to say 0.4 million(30% ash) our generation rate falls to $5.1 - 1.1 + 0.4 = 4.4\text{ million/ year}$ giving a landfill life of $143/4.4 = 33\text{ years}$

If we have 2 incinerator processing a total of 6000 T/day this will reduce 2.2 million Te/year to 0.8 million (30% ash) our generation rate falls to $5.1 - 2.2 + 0.8 = 3.7\text{ million/ year}$ giving a life of $143/3.7 = 39\text{ years}$

Conclusion

Incinerators don't really help a lot w/o a use for all the ash but, we do gain the electricity if CLP can be forced to buy it

Meanwhile HKG's ultra wet waste needs more energy to burn so less to sell.

Incinerators only delay the landfill problem by 5 or 10 years at most & is flawed policy

We need Zero Waste policies with source separation of waste legislation

dynamco Dec 29th 2015 11:27am online comment

what about the **source separation of waste legislation** ?

what about the **Zero Waste policies** ?

if the food waste was separated dry recyclable paper, cardboard, glass etc would remain

the food waste can be collected, taken to transfer stations & garburated and fed into the sewer system

Our daily waste water level is 1.4m cubic meters

Stonecutters can handle 2.7m cubic meters per day

3600 cubic meters of food waste would take only 5 minutes to pass thru the plant & most of it would have been eaten up by bacteria before even arriving there

www.ciwem.org/knowledge-networks/panels/wastewater-management/food-waste-disposers.aspx

But if we separate the food waste, then Govt collects & recycles the dry recyclables, there would not be enough left to burn under the Govt flawed current incinerator policy



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Moreso, 30% of what is burned by weight remains as ash that needs landfilling

However as in a recent televised Legco meeting serious doubts were raised on the real remaining landfill capacity - the Govt lied about this as it also lied about 'real' local recycling levels when operation Green Fence exposed the imported transit waste to China was added to local 'recycling' stats

Moreover IPCC reports show for every tonne of MSW burned, 0.8-1.2 tonnes of CO2 are released to air - what was baldylocks pontificating about reducing CO2 by 2020?

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/pub_consult/landfill_backgr_r01.html

"the 3 landfills will be full between 2012-2018"

South China Morning Post 南華早報

Published on *South China Morning Post* (<http://www.scmp.com>)

[Home](#) > Pollution, food waste and heavy traffic: what Hong Kong's chief executive should focus on in 2016

Pollution, food waste and heavy traffic: what Hong Kong's chief executive should focus on in 2016

PUBLISHED : Monday, 28 December, 2015, 4:36pm UPDATED : Monday, 28 December, 2015, 4:36pm

Comment > Insight & Opinion

Edwin Lau

Edwin Lau says Hongkongers shouldn't hesitate to let Leung Chun-ying know what he can do to make Hong Kong a more liveable place

Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying's invitation to the public to contribute their views to his preparation for the upcoming policy address is a wonderful opportunity to suggest ways to make Hong Kong more liveable.

[READ MORE: How China, the 'world's largest polluter', is tackling climate change \[1\]](#)

Climate change is a pressing global challenge. At the [UN climate summit in Paris](#) [2], 20 countries including China and the US launched the [Mission Innovation](#) [3] initiative with a collective commitment of US\$20 billion to accelerate global clean energy innovation. So how much will the Leung administration commit to the climate challenge?

Here are some suggestions of what we can do:

- Vegetation targets. Hong Kong is fortunate to have a natural carbon sink in our country parks, as long as we don't allow housing development to encroach on them. We should set targets for vegetation coverage in the country parks and throughout the city.
- Des Voeux Road Central. To improve air quality, congested Des Voeux Road Central should be turned into a [vehicle-free zone](#) [4], with water features to mitigate the concrete-jungle feel. This would persuade people to walk or take public transport, which is good for public health. Leung should learn from the South Korean government, which removed an elevated highway in Seoul's city centre to revitalise the Cheonggyecheon stream, now an urban park.

[READ MORE: Hong Kong's waste problem: a striking trail of missed targets, data errors and misdirected efforts \[5\]](#)

- Food waste. More than 3,600 tonnes of food waste is created daily in Hong Kong. Although our government plans to build three organic waste treatment facilities between 2016 and 2021, the total daily capacity they can handle is only 800 tonnes, or 22 per cent of our food waste.



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Hong Kong still does not have a waste charging law. If food waste recycling was made mandatory, all private food waste recyclers would operate round the clock to help achieve the government target of reducing food waste disposal at landfills by 40 per cent by 2022.

- Energy efficiency. Publicising the energy utilisation index of all buildings would be a cost-effective way to encourage these buildings, through peer pressure, to improve their energy efficiency. Currently, the law requires only commercial buildings to declare their index, whereas government buildings are exempted.
- Energy savings. There should be a government-led programme for generating “negawatts” – energy saved instead of consumed, which is the cleanest energy of all. If Hong Kong’s 7 million residents each generate just one “negawatt” a day, Hong Kong would save 1.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year.

The question is, will Leung take the lead and implement these suggestions?

Edwin Lau Che-feng is a veteran environmentalist



Source URL:

<http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1895532/pollution-food-waste-and-heavy-traffic-what-hong-kongs-chief?comment-sort=all>

Links

- [1] <http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/article/1891794/how-china-worlds-largest-polluter-taking-climate-change>
- [2] <http://www.scmp.com/topics/paris-climate-summit-2015>
- [3] <http://mission-innovation.net/>
- [4] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/1851829/save-tram-hong-kong-environment-and-planning>
- [5] <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1885428/hong-kongs-waste-problem-stinking-trail-missed-targets-data>