

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)018

(Question Serial No. 3194)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (1) Energy Supply; Electrical, Gas and Nuclear Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (POON Kwok-ying)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

The provision for 2024-25 is \$16.2 million (8.6%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. This is mainly due to the increased provisions for providing technical support to take forward the initiative of the use of hydrogen as fuel and other operational expenses. There will be a net decrease of two posts in 2024-25 under this programme. In this regard, please inform this Committee of:

1. the specific details, timetable, staffing and estimated expenditure involved regarding the technical support provided for the Environmental and Ecology Bureau on the use of hydrogen as fuel;
2. the work details of and related expenditure (if any) on the posts proposed to be created; and
3. the work details of and related expenditure on the posts proposed to be deleted.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Siu-hung (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

1. The Government of the Special Administrative Region set up the Inter-departmental Working Group on Using Hydrogen as Fuel (the Working Group) in 2022 to coordinate the efforts of various policy bureaux and departments in preparation for the adoption of hydrogen fuel locally and to promote the local application of hydrogen energy through trial projects. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has actively participated in the Working Group, providing professional support in terms of technical and safety expertise and conducting relevant consultancy studies, to assist the Working Group in examining applications for trial projects on hydrogen fuel technology intended to be taken forward locally and to establish an operational safety framework for the use of hydrogen energy in Hong Kong. To cope with the use of hydrogen fuel in Hong Kong, the EMSD, after consulting the trade, has completed the formulation of safety guidelines for hydrogen-fuelled vehicles and maintenance workshops, safety guidelines for hydrogen refuelling stations, and guidance notes on quantitative risk assessment study for hydrogen installations. These guidelines have been applied in ongoing trial projects on hydrogen fuel technology currently conducted in Hong Kong. The EMSD will continue to update the guidelines having regard to the development of

hydrogen energy technology and the experience gained from implementing trial projects on hydrogen fuel technology, in order to keep pace with the times. To provide a legal framework applicable to the local use of hydrogen energy, the EMSD is studying about making amendments to the Gas Safety Ordinance (Cap. 51), including incorporating the aforementioned guidelines into the legal framework. The EMSD conducted a month-long trade consultation from 20 February to 19 March this year, receiving a broadly positive response. The EMSD will continue to take forward the amendment work, with a view to introducing a bill into the Legislative Council in 2025. Regarding the manpower arrangement for promoting the development of hydrogen energy locally, the EMSD established the Hydrogen Team in 2023-24, including 9 professional grade posts. In 2024-25, the Hydrogen Team will continue to participate in promoting the development of hydrogen energy in Hong Kong, including engaging with the trade and advancing hydrogen energy trial projects, as well as continuing the work to amend the Gas Safety Ordinance to regulate the safety of hydrogen fuel. The estimated expenditure for the posts concerned is approximately \$10.983 million.

2.&3. In 2024-25, there will be a net deletion of 2 posts no longer required for operational need, including 1 professional grade post and 1 support grade post, involving a provision of approximately \$800,000.

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