

Joint Response to the Hong Kong SAR Government's 'Roadmap on the Popularisation of Electric Vehicles'

Date: 24-April-2021

To Chairman and Members of Panel on Environmental Affairs, Legislative Council

(c/o Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs)

Legislative Council Complex, 1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Panel on Environmental Affairs Meeting on 26 April 2021, agenda item #IV "Roadmap on the Popularisation of Electric Vehicles"

Banning new sales of all internal combustion engine vehicles and moving rapidly towards electrification, along with cleaning the power grid, are key to forging a low-carbon and zero pollution transport system. By achieving these, Hong Kong will be one step closer to clean air and carbon neutrality by 2050. Air pollution in Hong Kong incurred an average of 1,600 premature deaths, 112,000 hospital bed days, 2 million doctor visits and HKD19 billion in economic losses over the last 5 years¹. A rapid transition of our road transport to reach zero emissions will significantly reduce public health costs in Hong Kong. Earlier research indicates that transport emissions in Hong Kong would drop 31% below the business-as-usual case if Hong Kong banned the sales of all fossil-fuel vehicles between 2035 and 2040². With its EV Roadmap, Hong Kong is taking a crucial first step in decarbonizing the mobility sector, following suit of other countries and regions such as Norway (2025), the United Kingdom (2030), and Hainan province (2030) which have announced target years for banning the sale of fossil fuel vehicles. However, the scope and ambition of the HKSAR Government's Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles ('Roadmap')³ are hardly satisfactory.

In particular, we note:

(1) The Roadmap only commits to a ban of new sales of fossil-fuel private cars, which account for just over a quarter of road transport carbon emissions and less than 10% of roadside air pollution, by 2035.

(2) More concrete action plans are needed.

¹ Hedley Environmental Index (Mar 2021), <http://hedleyindex.hku.hk/> . Accessed 22 March 2021.

² Towards a Better Hong Kong: Pathways to Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050. 2020, <https://civicexchange.org/report/towards-a-better-hong-kong/>

³ Hong Kong Electric Vehicle Popularisation Roadmap. 2021, https://www.enb.gov.hk/sites/default/files/pdf/EV_roadmap_eng.pdf

- **Large and high-mileage emitters**, including commercial vehicles such as taxis, buses and trucks, **are insufficiently addressed and must be included** with specified phase-out target years and timelines. The HKSAR Government must start tackling electrification or adoption of alternative fuels for buses and freight vehicles and should explore appropriate charging infrastructure investment plans and vehicle financing mechanisms now instead of deferring further details to subsequent roadmap reviews.
- A far more **comprehensive charging infrastructure plan is needed** and should at least encompass tailored charging strategies for different vehicle classes, standardization of charging plugs and standards, as well as building of a public charging information platform.

(3) **High-level coordination among Government bureaus and departments must be ensured.** The development of an effective charging infrastructure will require extensive cross-agency collaboration to address grid expansion, supply of land, faster implementation of novel technologies and effective liaison between the public and private sector.

Achieving net zero transport will necessitate a much wider vision beyond the current Roadmap. It must set firm targets across vehicle fleets, formulate a more concretized action plan with comprehensive deployment of manpower and resources, and foster close collaboration from all involved HKSAR Government bureaus and departments as well as key trade and industry stakeholders.

Complementary policy measures beyond technological changes must also be devised to support a rapid transition to a decarbonized and zero pollution transport system. Potential complementary measures should include setting up zero emission zones in dense urban areas, congestion charging or electronic road pricing (ERP) schemes, carbon-indexed import duties on fossil fuelled vehicles, and other similar measures. Further focus must be placed on mobility policies which can 'avoid' and 'shift' journeys, including efficient town planning, enhancing walkability and improving public transport connectivity.

c.c. Secretary for the Environment, Wong Kam-sing, GBS, JP