

Survey shows Strong Citizen Support for the Municipal Solid Waste Charging Bill

Think Tank Urges Legislative Council to Expedite the Passage of Bill

HONG KONG, 20 MAY 2021 – Independent public policy think tank, Civic Exchange, released the results of a public opinion survey on the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018. Nearly 70% of total respondents agree there is a need to implement Municipal Solid Waste charging bill in Hong Kong. Notably, support for the bill is close to 70% amongst white-collar workers, students and those with tertiary education. Among respondents who are production workers and homemakers, we also observe more than 60% are supportive of the bill.

The MSW charging bill, proposed decades ago, is expected to reduce solid waste by 40% to 0.8kg per capita per day by 2022. In 2019, disposed waste per capita is still staying high at the rate of 1.47kg per day, failing to reach the official target set out in the Waste Blueprint 2013-2022.

The survey results show that the bill is supported by the majority and across social strata of the public. Civic Exchange urges Legco to pass the Bill before the end of the current term, which will lay an important foundation for Hong Kong to implement the waste reduction targets of the *Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035*.

Nearly 65% of respondents agree to the proposed charge and the polluters-pay principle

Conducted by the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (PORI), the survey gauged Hong Kong people's views on the MSW charging bill and their waste management practices, with a sample size of 1,012 people randomly surveyed in mid-January 2021.

65% of respondents agree to the proposed charge of HK\$0.11 per liter, along with pre-paid designated garbage bags. This means an average household with three members will have to pay \$1-2 per day. In addition, nearly 80% believe the transitional period 12 to 18 months for MSW charging adoption is long enough, and 50% of respondents find the bill helpful in reducing waste overall.

“These results offer optimism for Hong Kong and reflect that citizens support the Polluter Pays principle and understand they can lessen the burden to the recycling system if they work with industries to reduce waste at source,” said Lawrence Lu, Program Manager at Civic Exchange. “However, the results also reflect our recycling and waste disposal infrastructures require a significant update and trust to be rebuilt in the system.”

Key Recommendations from Civic Exchange based on survey results

- The Legislative Council should provide sufficient backing for, and enact the MSW charging bill, given the strong public support for the bill

- Industry leaders should understand the positive contribution of the Polluter Pays Principle to the society and actively support the implementation of MSW charging
- The Government should introduce a grace period of no more than 18 months to allow adequate time for adoption across the society before full implementation
- The Government should consider the following items to support the implementation of the bill:
 - Reinforce cooperation with waste and recycling industries, as well as consumer goods industries
 - Leverage non-profit organisations and stakeholder groups via education and publicity to raise public awareness
 - Set out a sectoral specific waste reduction target that is missing in the latest Waste Blueprint to track the city's waste management progress
- Environmental groups should strengthen collaboration on waste issues to expand public understanding and social influence

Failure to pass the MSW Charging bill within this Legco term will be a great setback to Hong Kong's waste management strategy, making it more difficult for the Government to meet the objectives of this year's Waste Blueprint and increasing the need to rely on aversive measures to resolve urgent issues. It will take another 3 to 5 years' cycle of law-making before this much-needed measure can be tabled again.

Please scan the following QR codes to download our presentation deck and executive summary.



Media Enquiries

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