

Government statement on Rating (Amendment) Bill 2019

In response to the decision of the Bills Committee on Rating (Amendment) Bill 2019 (the Bill) today (June 23) to discontinue its scrutiny work on the Bill, a spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau made the following statement:

"In view of the continuous increase in the number of unsold first-hand private residential units in completed projects in recent years, the Government announced on June 29, 2018 the proposed amendment to the Rating Ordinance for the introduction of Special Rates on vacant first-hand private residential units to encourage more timely supply of completed first-hand private residential units to the market.

The Government introduced the Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) for scrutiny in October 2019. The Bill proposes that developers of first-hand private residential units with occupation permits issued for 12 months or more should furnish annual returns to the Rating and Valuation Department on the status of the units. If the units are unsold and have not been rented out 183 days or more in aggregate during the past 12 months, the developers will need to pay Special Rates in respect of the units. The proposed Special Rates are chargeable at a flat rate of 200 per cent of the rateable value of the relevant unit.

Since the House Committee's decision to set up Bills Committee for the Bill in May this year, the Government has spared no effort in facilitating the scrutiny of the Bill by the Bills Committee, explaining the policy objectives in relation to Special Rates and the content of the Bill as well as listening to the views of Members.

The Government is disappointed that the Bill could not be passed in the current term of LegCo following the Bill Committee's decision to discontinue its scrutiny work due to time constraint. The Government, nonetheless, expressed gratitude to the scrutiny work and efforts made by the Bills Committee.

The Government will, as always, closely monitor the situation in the residential property market, and implement measures as and when necessary with a view to ensuring the healthy development of the property market. The Government will take into account the market circumstances when considering whether to re-introduce the Bill into LegCo for scrutiny in the next LegCo term."

LegCo to consider Employment (Amendment) Bill 2019

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat:

The LegCo will hold a meeting tomorrow (June 24) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, the Second Reading debate on the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2019 will resume. If the Bill is supported by Members and receives its Second Reading, it will stand committed to the committee of the whole Council. After the committee of the whole Council has completed consideration of the Bill and its report is adopted by the Council, the Bill will be set down for the Third Reading.

Mr Holden Chow will move a proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Property Management Services Ordinance (Commencement) Notice 2020 and the Property Management Services (Licensing and Related Matters) Regulation, laid on the table of the LegCo on May 27, 2020, to the meeting of July 15, 2020.

Ms Chan Hoi-yan will also move a proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong (Amendment) (No.3) Regulation 2020, the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places (Amendment) (No.2) Regulation 2020, the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulation 2020 and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) (Amendment) (No.4) Regulation 2020, laid on the table of the LegCo on June 3, 2020, to the first sitting of the next session of the LegCo.

On Members' motions, Ms Yung Hoi-yan and Ms Alice Mak will move separate motions under Rule 49B(1A) of the Rules of Procedure to censure Ms Claudia Mo and Mr Dennis Kwok. The motions are set out in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

Mr Lam Cheuk-ting and Ms Mo will move two separate motions under the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance, in relation to the incident of assaults occurred in Yuen Long Station of West Rail Line of the MTR Corporation Limited on July 21, 2019. The motions are set out in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

Mr Alvin Yeung, Dr Kwok Ka-ki and Mr Kwong Chun-yu will move three separate motions under Article 73(5) and (10) of the Basic Law and the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance, in relation to the incident of assaults occurred in Prince Edward Station of the MTR Corporation Limited on August 31, 2019. The motions are set out in Appendices 5-7

respectively.

Ms Tanya Chan, Dr Kwok, Dr Fernando Cheung and Mr Kenneth Leung will move seven separate motions under Article 73(5) and (10) of the Basic Law and the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance, in relation to the Police's handling of protesters and persons performing duties in the protests during the "anti-extradition to China" movement. The motions are set out in Appendices 8-14 respectively.

Mr Chung Kwok-pan and Dr Priscilla Leung will move two separate motions under the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance, in relation to the causes and consequences of the social conflicts or disturbances arising from the amendments to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and related matters. The motions are set out in Appendices 15 and 16 respectively. Mr James To will move an amendment to Dr Leung's motion.

Mr Charles Mok, Mr Jeremy Tam and Dr Kwok will also move four separate motions under Article 73(5) and (10) of the Basic Law to summon persons concerned to produce papers and testify. The motions are set out in Appendices 17-20 respectively.

Meanwhile, Mr Kwok will move a motion on no confidence in the Fifth Term Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as set out in Appendix 21. Ms Mo will move an amendment to Mr Kwok's motion.

Mr Lam will move a motion on strengthening the combat against parallel trading activities, and tightening the arrangements for Mainland residents visiting Hong Kong. The motion is set out in Appendix 22.

During the meeting, Members will also ask the Government 22 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk). Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meeting at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

Woman fined for operating unlicensed guesthouse

A woman was fined \$3,500 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 23) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in October last year, officers of the Office of

the Licensing Authority (OLA), Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Ko Shing Street in Sheung Wan. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for operating the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

[Operator fined for illegal club operation](#)

A man was fined \$3,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 23) for contravening the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance.

The courts heard that in September last year, officers from the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department conducted an inspection at a club on Foo Ming Street in Causeway Bay, which had been operating with a certificate of compliance (CoC).

The OLA officers found that the club had a layout that deviated from the registered drawing. Condition 3 of the CoC was breached. The man, being the operator of the club, was charged with contravening section 21(1) (a) of the Ordinance.

A spokesman for the department reminded all CoC holders to comply with the conditions as stipulated therein. Enforcement action will continue to be taken against illegal club operation.

Grants approved for flood victims in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in Mainland

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has approved from the Disaster Relief Fund two grants totalling \$1.1 million to two agencies for providing relief to flood victims in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the Mainland.

Announcing the grants today (June 23), a spokesman for the Government said that the two grants – one of \$0.55 million to Amity Foundation, Hong Kong and one of \$0.55 million to Oxfam Hong Kong – will be used to provide rice, cooking oil and instant noodles to around 12 000 flood victims to address their imminent need. As the targeted localities of the two relief agencies are different, there will be no overlapping of resources. The grants were approved under the fast-track mechanism set up on the advice of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee to facilitate relief agencies kick-starting first-phase emergency relief work.

"To ensure that the money is used for the designated purposes, the relief agencies will be asked to submit evaluation reports and audited accounts on the use of the grants after the relief projects have been completed," the spokesman said.