

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)254

(Question Serial No. 3476)

Head: (100) Marine Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Port Services (3) Local Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Mr S.F. WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Regarding the collection of refuse from locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels, please advise on:

- (a) the staffing, expenditures and numbers of vessels involved in collecting refuse from fishing vessels, locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels, either by staff of the Marine Department (MD) or the contractor it engaged, in the past 3 years (2021-22 to 2023-24); and the staffing, expenditures and numbers of vessels involved in collecting refuse in various typhoon shelters in the past 3 years (2021-22 to 2023-24);
- (b) the mechanism adopted by MD for collecting refuse in various typhoon shelters and the daily collection schedules;
- (c) whether MD will consider providing additional notification channels or establishing a mechanism in addition to the 24-hour hotline manned by officers on duty, email and fax so as to improve the service for collecting refuse for fishing vessels in typhoon shelters;
- (d) the total quantities of marine refuse collected by MD in the past 3 years (2021-22 to 2023-24) and the total quantities of refuse collected in typhoon shelters (please provide the information by month); and
- (e) the number of notifications issued by the notification and alert system on marine refuse since its setting up under the Hong Kong-Guangdong Marine Environmental Management Special Panel, with the extent of its effectiveness; and the way to an enhanced cross-border collaboration between Guangdong and Hong Kong.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 46)

Reply:

- (a) The Marine Department (MD) has conducted a comprehensive review on the tender of marine refuse cleansing and disposal service contract for the whole of Hong Kong waters. In the review, MD has considered different ways, such as splitting contract

service areas and removing unnecessary contract service requirements to reduce the contract price, thereby making the most cost-effective tender award.

MD signed the contract for marine refuse cleansing and disposal services with the existing contractor for a term of 3 years commencing on 1 October 2022 and ending on 30 September 2025, involving a contract expenditure of about \$299.75 million.

Under the contract, the contractor is currently providing a fleet of at least 42 vessels of various types for marine refuse cleansing and support to clean up marine refuse in Hong Kong waters on a daily basis (including Sundays and public holidays), which includes offering domestic refuse collection service to vessels berthed in typhoon shelters, anchorages and small boat anchorage areas. The contractor may deploy more vessels in accordance with the actual needs to clean up marine refuse. The services provided under the contract for marine refuse cleansing services include cleaning up floating refuse, collecting domestic refuse from vessels, managing refuse collection points and transporting refuse to landfills for disposal, etc. Since the overall contract cost includes the staffing, expenditure and number of vessels involved in collecting refuse from fishing vessels, locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels in typhoon shelters, there is no separate breakdown of the expenditure involved.

As for the staffing of MD, there are mainly 10 Marine Inspector IIs and 4 patrol launches responsible for the inspection of sea water cleanliness across the territory and monitoring of the contractor's performance, as well as requiring the contractor to redeploy resources in accordance with the actual needs to address the floating refuse problems in various districts. MD will continue to monitor and regularly review the effectiveness of marine refuse cleansing and disposal work in accordance with the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee on the collection and removal of marine refuse, so as to ensure its cost-effectiveness and service quality.

- (b) Currently, the marine refuse cleansing contractor of MD has refuse collection boats stationed in major typhoon shelters such as Sam Ka Tsuen, Shau Kei Wan, Causeway Bay, To Kwa Wan, New Yau Ma Tei, Tuen Mun, Sai Kung, Cheung Chau and Shuen Wan for collecting refuse from vessels at those typhoon shelters at least once a day. The refuse collection boats of the contractor generally sail through the typhoon shelters in the morning period to collect refuse from vessels. Vessels berthed in the typhoon shelters may also make calls to MD or the contractor for arranging refuse collection service. Since the end of 2015, the frequency of collecting refuse from vessels in Aberdeen Typhoon Shelters have been increased to twice a day, i.e. once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- (c) Apart from the 24-hour hotlines (2385 2791 or 2385 2792) manned by duty officers of MD, the contractor has set up a hotline (3527 3929) to facilitate the arrangement for refuse collection service. At meetings before fishing moratorium and Lunar New Year, MD will also inform those in need, via the attending representatives of various organisations, of the available channels to provide information by email (admpcu@mardep.gov.hk) or by fax (2543 6877) for arranging refuse collection service.

- (d) The quantities of marine refuse (including floating refuse, refuse collected from ships, and refuse collected from locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels) collected in the past 3 years are shown in the table below:

Quantities of marine refuse collected by MD (the actual weight in tonnes)			
	2021	2022	2023
January	146.5	192.6	138.0
February	140.8	111.6	142.5
March	154.9	146.9	174.5
April	188.1	171.2	196.5
May	232.7	241.6	199.6
June	279.4	396.7	250.0
July	307.0	371.6	234.3
August	274.2	314.4	250.1
September	219.0	228.3	359.8
October	204.1	180.9	176.8
November	169.8	162.2	142.9
December	180.5	144.3	139.2
Total	2 497.0	2 662.3	2 404.2

The refuse from locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels is mainly collected in typhoon shelters, with only a small quantity collected in small boat anchorage areas. MD does not maintain separate statistics on the quantities of refuse collected in individual typhoon shelters and small boat anchorage areas. The quantities of refuse collected in typhoon shelters are therefore not separately accounted for.

- (e) The Government has been maintaining close liaison with Guangdong through the Hong Kong-Guangdong Marine Environmental Management Special Panel to continually enhance the arrangements for relevant cross-border collaboration and the incident notification mechanism in handling marine refuse and environmental incidents. Since the commencement of operation of the notification and alert system on marine refuse in May 2017, the Environmental Protection Department had triggered the mechanism and issued a total of 47 timely notifications to Guangdong due to inclement weather or environmental incidents as of the end of 2023, so that both parties could deploy resources effectively for better preparation, timely clean-up and follow-up actions. Furthermore, Guangdong and Hong Kong will continue to organise coastal clean-up activities to jointly promote the messages of keeping the shoreline clean and protecting the ocean together.