

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)200

(Question Serial No. 3778)

Head: (100) Marine Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (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) the utilisation rates and frequency of the means of contact provided by MD for refuse collection service for fishing vessels in typhoon shelters, namely the 24-hour hotline, email and fax; and the average time required to process a notification;
- (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.: 68)

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 HK\$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 contract for marine refuse cleansing services includes 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 for such items.

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 performance of the contractor, as well as requiring the contractor to redeploy resources in accordance with the actual needs to address the floating refuse problems in various districts. In accordance with the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee on the collection and removal of marine refuse, MD will continue to monitor and regularly review the effectiveness of marine refuse cleansing and disposal work, 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 Shelter has been increased to twice a day, i.e. once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- (c) For refuse collection service for fishing vessels in typhoon shelters, MD has set up a 24-hour hotline, email and fax for notification. However, since these means of contact are not exclusive to fishing vessels in typhoon shelters, MD does not keep separate records on their utilisation rate and frequency.

Generally speaking, upon receipt of a request for refuse collection service, MD will arrange for the contractor to collect refuse for fishing vessels as soon as possible. The contractor is required to handle the cases within the prescribed timeframe, in accordance with the requirements of the contract terms and the geographical location of the cases.

According to records, the contractor successfully fulfills service requests within the designated timeframe.

- (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 tabulated below:

| Quantities of marine refuse collected by MD (actual weight in tonnes) | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
| January | 192.6 | 138.0 | 138.4 |
| February | 111.6 | 142.5 | 117.6 |
| March | 146.9 | 174.5 | 159.8 |
| April | 171.2 | 196.5 | 191.2 |
| May | 241.6 | 199.6 | 226.5 |
| June | 396.7 | 250.0 | 260.2 |
| July | 371.6 | 234.3 | 322.4 |
| August | 314.4 | 250.1 | 224.5 |
| September | 228.3 | 359.8 | 209.9 |
| October | 180.9 | 176.8 | 145.9 |
| November | 162.2 | 142.9 | 152.8 |
| December | 144.3 | 139.2 | 132.1 |
| Total | 2 662.3 | 2 404.2 | 2 281.3 |

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, and therefore does not maintain a separate breakdown of the amount of refuse collected in typhoon shelters.

- (e) The Government of the HKSAR has been maintaining close liaison with the Provincial Government of Guangdong through the “Hong Kong-Guangdong Marine Environmental Management Special Panel” to continually enhance arrangements for relevant cross-boundary 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 56 timely notifications to the Provincial Government of Guangdong due to inclement weather or environmental incidents as of end-2024, so that both parties could deploy resources effectively for better preparation, timely clean-up and follow-up actions. Furthermore, Hong Kong and Guangdong will continue to organise coastal clean-up activities to jointly promote the messages of keeping the shoreline clean and protecting the ocean together.