

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

TLB053

(Question Serial No. 0084)

Head: (100) Marine Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Local Services
Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Mr S.F. WONG)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

Under the influence of the external environment, river trade cargo vessel arrivals have been dropping continuously. Due to insufficient cargo throughput, river barges can hardly benefit from the buy-five-get-five-free discount on the one-month Multiple Entry Permit (MEP) offered by the Government. There have been suggestions to adjust the discount to buy-one-get-one-free. According to the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy was formulated in December 2023 to support the development of the maritime and port industry, which included the action measure of reviewing the permit fees imposed on river trade vessels. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) statistics on the usage of the buy-five-get-five-free discount on MEP by river trade cargo vessels in the past 3 years (i.e. 2023, 2024 and 2025), including the average monthly number of river trade cargo vessel arrivals and the number of MEPs in use under the discount;
- 2) regarding the Government's action measure of reviewing the permit fees imposed on river trade vessels, please advise on the expected time for the results to be available and announced; and
- 3) the manpower resources involved in conducting port formalities for river trade vessels.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Chun, Jonathan (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

1. In the past 3 years, the average monthly number of river trade cargo vessel arrivals and the annual number of Multiple Entry Permits (MEPs) in use are set out as follows:

Year	Average monthly number of river trade cargo vessel arrivals	Annual number of MEPs issued to river trade cargo vessels
2023	3 622	743*
2024	3 668	5 650
2025	3 521	5 865

*Note: The waiver period of the “Permit to Remain” fees payable by river trade vessels during the COVID-19 pandemic was from 1 November 2019 to 31 October 2023. Since river trade vessels were not required to pay the “Permit to Remain” fees during the waiver period, there was no need for them to apply for MEPs.

2. The Transport and Logistics Bureau formulated the Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy in December 2023 to support the development of the maritime and port industry. Regarding the action measure of reviewing the permit fees imposed on river trade vessels under the Plan, we have preliminarily completed the review and will announce relevant details in a timely manner.
3. The handling of port formalities for river trade vessels forms part of the normal duties of Marine Department officers. There is no separate breakdown on the manpower involved.

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