

LCQ14: Application for discharging firecrackers

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Following is a question by the Hon Audrey Eu Yuet-mee and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (January 18):

Question:

Under the Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations (Cap. 295B), any person without a permit granted by the Authority shall not discharge any firework. Quite a number of members of the public have reflected that the festive atmosphere in Hong Kong during the Chinese New Year period is considerably reduced because of this stipulation. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number of applications for discharging firecrackers received by the Authority in the past three years;

(b) of the number of applications for discharging firecrackers approved by the Authority in the past three years;

(c) whether it has any plan to invite the disadvantaged children to discharge firecrackers at the Government Headquarters and Government House during the first month of every Lunar Year to celebrate the Spring Festival together; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(d) whether it has considered, with reference to the practice of Macao, permitting members of the public to discharge firecrackers in a safe and orderly manner at specified locations (e.g. certain harbourfront areas, specified outlying islands or theme parks); if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the four parts of the question is as follows:

(a) Under the Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations (Cap. 295B), the Secretary for Home Affairs and the Director of Marine are the respective Authorities for the

approval of permits for discharging firecrackers and fireworks on land and over water. As regards applications for discharging firecrackers in the past three years, the Home Affairs Bureau has received one application to set up designated firecrackers discharge zones during Chinese New Year. The Marine Department has not received any applications for discharging firecrackers over water.

(b) The application described in paragraph (a) above was not approved, and the Authorities have not approved any application to discharge firecrackers in the past three years.

(c) and (d) Whilst some people take the view that discharging firecrackers would enhance the festive atmosphere, the explosives contained in the firecrackers, if not handled properly, may pose a threat to public safety. Considering the circumstances of Hong Kong, it is not appropriate at this time to relax controls on the discharge of firecrackers, including partial relaxation of controls. We neither have any plans to implement the suggestion contained in part (c) of the question, nor consider to follow the practice of Macao as suggested in part (d) of the question.

Ends/Wednesday, January 18, 2012

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