



By Fax & Mail

12 March 2013

Environment Bureau
The Government of HKSAR
16/F., East Wing,
Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar,
Hong Kong

(Attn.: Ms. Christine LOH,
Under Secretary for the Environment)

Dear Christine,

Thank you for meeting with us on 4 March 2013 out of your busy schedules, we would like to address our Institute's concern on the following issues raised and discussed during the foresaid meeting –

1) Biogenic Volatile Organic Compound (BVOC) Emissions

Our Institute has great concern on the effect of publishing the 'Guidelines on Selecting Species for Greening', as this will have alarming effect to the general public, and may have catastrophic effect on the long-standing greening efforts by various stakeholders including government departments, professionals, and communities at large. Though we do agree that plants do emit certain amount of BVOC, as do humans and livestock, the publication of such list, which includes mostly native and commonly used species in the region, will arouse public panic and confusion. We suggest that your Bureau to conduct more scientific researches and establish the overall benefits of these plant species to the environment, such as, absorption of carbon dioxide, their inter-relationship with soil-water-air interchange, bio-diversity of the various species, etc, instead of a single objective on BVOC emission.

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2) Representation in the Advisory Committee for Environment (ACE)

Due to the increasing concern on the landscape and visual quality of our natural and built environment, landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIAs) are frequently required in EIA reports and we sincerely request your Bureau to consider appointing qualified members of HKILA on their personal capacity to the Advisory Committee to provide expert advices on LVIAs.

3) Recycling of tree/plant debris

We propose that your Bureau to consider taking forward the study on the feasibility and potentials of recycling tree/plant debris accumulated during normal vegetation maintenance, and after inclement weather. Such materials, if untreated, will generally end up in the landfill sites and the recycling of the large amount of tree/plant debris may result in a win-win situation to the landscape industry and the environment.

We look forward to meeting with you and/or your colleagues again to take these issues forward for a better living environment in Hong Kong.

Yours sincerely,



Tak Wong
President
HKILA

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The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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8 April 2013

Mr Tak Wong
President
The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
P.O. Box 20561
Hennessy Road Post Office
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Wong,

Thank you for coming to see me and your subsequent letter dated 12 March 2013.

(1) Biogenic Volatile Organic Compound (BVOC) Emissions

We fully recognise the significance of trees on the environment and have long been supporting the tree planting and greening as the means to help reduce heat island effect as well as improve the amenity and well-beings of our community. There is, however, increasing evidence to show that some of the tree species could emit significantly more BVOC than others. These BVOC would be even more potent than the anthropogenic volatile organic compounds in forming the health threatening ozone and photochemical smog. We trust that a proper planning and selection of the tree species could help combat our notorious air pollution which has been responsible for causing thousands of pre-mature deaths and hospital admissions in Hong Kong. While there have already been quite a wealth of evidence overseas to show the significance of BVOC in the ozone and smog formation and hence the taking of the precautionary approach in the greening and tree planting would be most beneficial to both public health and environment as a whole, we note that there is a scantiness in the local researches in this area. We would engage our

universities and other research institutions to carry out more detailed studies so as to help further beef up and improve the usefulness of our proposed guidelines to the relevant tree planting and greening professionals before finalisation. We look forward to the full support of your Institute to help us to combat our very serious ozone and smog problems by making judicious choice of tree species for greening.

(2) Representation in ACE

Your suggestion has been noted.

(3) Recycling of tree/plant debris

We have already begun to do this.

Thank you again and we look forward to staying in touch with you on matters where we can benefit from your expertise.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Christine Loh
Under Secretary for the Environment

cc Secretary for the Environment, Mr KS Wong
Assistant Director(Nature Conservation & Infrastructure Planning), Mr Elvis Au
Principal Environmental Protection Officer(Air Policy), Mr SW Pang