

Hong Kong, 07 September 2021

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Public Consultation on the Scheme on Regulation of Disposable Plastic Tableware
“Not easy - be tough”

Designing Hong Kong is writing to offer views on the captioned public consultation.

1. As set out in the consultation paper, it is estimated that roughly 14.6 billion pieces of plastic cutlery are being disposed throughout the year. We believe the amount of the disposable plastic tableware disposed in 2020 and 2021 is higher due to the increase in demand for takeaway food and because of heightened hygiene concerns due to COVID-19.
2. To reduce the plastic waste, we fully support government to take action to regulate disposable plastic tableware through legislation.
3. We agree that the Regulation Scheme should cover all types of disposable plastic tableware and their “plastic substitutes” that claim to be degradable or biodegradable.
4. We also fully support the full ban of polystyrene tableware to local end-consumers (including through catering premises).
5. We agree that the Scheme should cover all catering premises, and disposable plastic tableware should be banned for dine-in services and catering services including for private events.
6. We urge the government to set a clear timeline for the legislation process. While we support government’s plans for a two-phase implementation, government should set a clear deadline for the bans on the different types of disposable plastic tableware.
7. We urge government to announce the full ban to be effective 1 January 2025, and phase one to start as soon as possible and latest 31 December 2022.

8. Government can take an active role creating platforms for 1) the promotion of cleansing and hygiene monitoring of multi-use tableware including incentives for shared washing kitchens; and 2) for the promotion of alternative single-use tableware (guidelines and catalogues). These efforts will help ensure the F&B sector is better prepared for the pending changes.
9. The government may consider a short term subsidy scheme for the installation of washing kitchens and hygiene monitoring facilities, as well as one-off tax credits or allowances for cost of replacement of tableware.
10. We urge the Recycling Fund to offer schemes for research and development of commercial tableware washing practices, and research on market trends, suitability for local cuisine and lifetime costs of both reusable and non-plastic disposable tableware available nationally and internationally. Tests should consider Chinese cuisine characteristics. The results will help the F&B sector better understand needs and solutions.
11. Public education is vital. We believe that the full ban will result in a shift to other forms of disposables rather than reusable tableware. The government may consider promoting different means to reduce the consumption of disposable tableware, including BYOB (Bring Your Own BOX).
12. We recognize the cost will go up and convenience will be constrained, for both the public and the F&B trade, by the bans proposed in the caption scheme. It will be important to fund campaigns visualizing the daily amount of wasted single-use tableware. Videos showing the number of people who step out to pick up lunch and return to their office with plastic bags full of different plastic containers, only to see these wasted mixed with food remains after their short break. Or the bags left on the side of car parks by drivers. Or the sheer amounts disposed at construction sites. The ample opportunities for capturing images like these will give the public a better understanding of the extent of the single use disposable tableware problem Hong Kong is facing.

Here we submit our comments for your consideration.

Yours,

Designing Hong Kong Limited