

How Green is our Budget Report?

The Financial Secretary has stressed the ‘Green’ theme as central to this year’s budget report. As a political party which strongly advocates for a Green Hong Kong, we need to take a closer look. Here are some points and observations on the budget report related to the ‘Green’ theme;

1. **Upgrading of Public and Private Buildings** - \$450 million for private buildings energy auditing, \$130 million for energy efficiency upgrades for public buildings. Improving energy efficiencies and upgrading public and old private buildings are welcoming steps, but the resources set aside are grossly inadequate. Some 90% of our city’s building masses are existing ones, and buildings take up more than 90% of our city’s energy consumption. To effectively lower our city’s carbon footprint and energy consumption in the foreseeable future, a sustainable approach is needed with continuous resources to apply energy retrofitting and auditing to all our buildings. There should also be a conditional requirement for use of public funds for private buildings in maintenance retrofitting in accordance to auditing recommendations and recognized benchmarks.
2. **Retraining of Labor Force** - Close to \$413 million will be set aside for retraining our middle aged and disabled labor force. We believe this would be a good opportunity to infuse some new ‘Green’ skills to applicable job categories, so the retraining effort could compliment Hong Kong’s long term goal to nurturing a ‘Green Economy’. The government should set aside a portion of the funds specifically for this.
3. **Promoting Sustainable Economic Development** – The report mentions shoring up of our financial institutions, and provide professional and basic education courses in our secondary and tertiary institutions for our infrastructural support. We believe that ‘Green’ awareness and education should be part of this effort to teach our young the perils our environment faces, and the efforts they could make to help save it. This could include promotion of green skills and green professions, laying down the brick work for a future ‘Green Economy’.
4. **Consolidating our Position as a Financial Centre** – The report mentions capitalization of our strength as a Financial Centre, but fails to make direct references in how we can diversify our financial capabilities. One of the ways to consider is encouraging local finance industry to capitalizing on ‘Green’ investment fundraising and investment. Much innovative research and

manufacturing is occurring across the border, and it is high time for us to tap into this market.

5. **Conventions and Exhibitions** – The report mentions hardware and software upgrades for our conventions and exhibitions capabilities. We feel there is an opportunity here to promote ‘Green’ fairs and exhibitions to promote Hong Kong as a ‘Green’ hub.
6. **New Economic Initiatives** – The report mentions promoting Green Economies and other technology-based industries, without making direct recommendations on how to achieve this. While we welcome the administration’s acknowledgement to diversify our economic base, the statement does not elaborate on any agendas or commitment of resources to building a ‘Green Economy’. Reaffirming the need in principle, with no commitment appears will not help the situation. Mentioning ‘on-going’ efforts such as the Science Park ‘Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation Circle’, university research efforts and capabilities, Guangdong/Hong Kong co-operation, with no new initiatives is simply regurgitating what has been done. The government needs to set aside resources and devise achievable agendas, to help further push these on-going works and stimulate new areas.
7. **Research Grants** – An \$18 billion dollar Research Endowment Fund has been set aside to promote and advance our post graduate research programmes. There is however no mention of ‘Green’ researches. A portion of the sum should be set aside for specific ‘green’ related research. This will help jump start Hong Kong to becoming a ‘Green’ Hub and boost our prospects for a ‘Green Economy’.
8. **Green Economy** – On point 73, the Financial Secretary mentions the need and importance for a ‘Green Economy’. Quoting the report, ‘Promoting a "green economy" will enhance Hong Kong's overall competitiveness as well as making it a more livable city. We must boost efforts to help people and enterprises expand the opportunities of a green economy.’ While we welcome the acknowledgment, there is again a lack of commitment to any agendas or resources on how to go about it. Tax exemptions for electric and hybrid cars, continuing Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation in Environmental Protection, and establishment of Hong Kong Automotive Parts and Accessory Systems R&D Centre are all committed efforts, not new efforts. We however, welcome the government’s statement in studying implementation of ‘recharging facilities’ for electric cars, we hope to see a pilot scheme be implemented shortly.
9. **Building a Greener City** – The report mentions continued efforts to green our slopes, and green our public buildings, subsidized schools, and NGO buildings. We welcome this move, and we hope the scope will continue to grow.



公道自在民心 The Civic Way, the Fairer Way

This year's budget reports make plenty of reference to the 'Green' theme, but in general offers little additional resources and concrete commitments. The state of our environment is in dire state, and Hong Kong continues to suffer from worsening environmental pollutions. This report lacks concrete steps ahead, in a time when we need bold actions to lower our pollution levels, improve our energy efficiencies and promote a 'Green Economy' .

As the Financial Secretary aptly concludes at the end, 'The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.' Only concrete commitments now will help save our world, 'empty words' will waste the little time we have left to do the right thing.

Please feel free to respond to the above newsletter, we welcome any views and feedbacks and look forward to continue dialogue on the topic.

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我們的財政預算案有幾「綠」？

財政司司長以「綠色」作為今年預算案其中一個主題。我們作為一個提倡「綠色香港」的政黨，必須更深入了解預算案的相關內容。以下是我們對預算案「綠色」主題的一些觀點及意見：

1 改善公共及私人建築：撥款 4 億 5000 萬元予私人樓宇作能源審計，另撥款 1 億 3000 萬元，提升政府建築物的能源效益。我們歡迎預算案提出改善政府部門及私人樓宇的能源效益，不過政府預留的資源嚴重不足。約 90 % 的城市建築是現有建築，而建築物消耗了 90 % 以上的能源。要在可見的將來有效降低香港的碳足跡及能源消耗，我們需要有可持續發展的視野，持續地投放資源，在所有的建築物推行能源更新及審計。此外，政府亦應提出一個有條件的限制，規定如何運用公帑以協助私人樓宇作維修更新，以達至審計建議及認可的基準。

2 勞動力再培訓：預算案撥款近 4 億 1300 萬元，培訓中年人士及殘疾人士。我們相信，這將是一個很好的機會，注入一些新的「綠色」技能，應用於不同工種，政府應為此撥出一定的款項，以配合香港長遠發展，達至培育「綠色經濟」。

3 促進可持續經濟發展：預算案提到會支撐我們的金融機構，並在中學及高等教育機構，提供專業及基礎教育課程，以建立我們的基礎設施。我們認為這種努力應包括對「綠色」的關注及教育，讓我們的下一代認識正面對的環境危機，以及他們如何能夠為保護環境出一分力。要達致此目的，我們可以促進綠色技術及有關綠色的專業，以奠定今後「綠色經濟」的基礎。

4 鞏固我們作為金融中心的地位：預算案提出要強化我們作為金融中心的地位，但沒有直接提及如何令我們的財政能力多樣化。方法之一，是鼓勵本地金融業，利用「綠色」作為集資及投資方向。現時周邊地區正作出很多創新性研究及製造的方向發展，我們亦應趁機進入這個市場。

5 會議及展覽：預算案亦提到，將提升會議及展覽業的硬件及軟件配套。我們認為，香港有潛力發展「綠色」博覽及展覽事業，以促進香港作為一個綠色「樞紐」。

6 新的經濟措施：預算案雖有提及促進綠色經濟及其他技術為基礎的工業，不過未有直接提出建議，說明如何達致這個目標。雖然我們歡迎政府認同香港需要有多樣化的經濟基礎，但預算案沒有詳細說明任何議程，亦未有承諾投放資源建設「綠色經濟」。我們重申，如不提出承諾，對現時的局勢將無任何幫助。預算案

提出的，例如科學園的「深港創新圈」、大學的研究工作及能力、廣東與香港的合作等，都是在早已發展的項目上，作深化或加碼的發展，沒有提出新的措施。政府需要撥出資源，並制定可行的議程，在推動這些進行中的工作之餘，亦探討新領域的發展。

7 研究資助：預算案提到，已撥出 180 億元成立研究基金，以促進和深化大學研究生課程。不過，政府並沒有提到有關「綠色」的研究。我們認為在研究基金中，應預算一部分款項，作特定的「綠色」相關研究。這將有助於迅速啓動香港成爲一個「綠色」樞紐，並提高「綠色經濟」的發展。

8 綠色經濟：在預算案的第 73 段，財政司司長提到發展「綠色經濟」的必要性及重要性。預算案指，『推動「綠色經濟」不但可以把香港建設成宜居城市，也可以提升整體競爭力。我們必須把握這個發展趨勢，通過實質措施，協助市民和企業開拓綠色經濟機遇』。雖然我們歡迎政府對「綠色經濟」的認同，但預算案再次缺乏承諾，未有提出任何議程或資源，去具體說明將如何去達致此目的。電動及混合動力汽車免稅、繼續香港及廣東省在環保領域合作，以及建立香港汽車零部件及配件系統的研發中心等，都是早已承諾的措施，而不是新的建議。不過，我們歡迎政府研究爲電動車提升充電設施，我們期望將會實施具體的試驗計劃。

9 建設綠色城市：預算案提到將繼續努力，綠化山坡、政府建築、資助學校及非政府組織的建築物。我們歡迎這項措施，更希望政府能擴大綠化的範圍。

今年的預算案，有大量提及「綠色」的主題，但整體而言，幾乎沒有撥出額外資源及作出具體承諾。我們的環境正處於「可怕的」狀況，而香港的環境污染正不斷惡化。這份預算案缺乏具體步驟，現在，我們需要大膽的行動，以降低污染程度，改善我們的能源效益及促進「綠色經濟」。

正如財政司司長在預算案的結語：「一個道德社會的最終考驗，端視我們給予下一代一個怎樣的社會。」只有我們現時作出肯定的承諾，才可拯救我們的世界，「空談」只會浪費我們僅餘可以做正確的事的時間。

歡迎隨時回應我們任何意見及反饋，並期待繼續就上述議題與各位討論。

郭榮臻

公民黨“綠色新經濟”專責組