

LCQ13: Service life of franchised buses

Following is a question by the Hon Audrey Eu and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (March 9):

Question:

I have received an increasing number of complaints from members of the public that some old franchised buses are still in service even after reaching 17 years of age, but may, on application, continue to run for a further year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the purpose of extending the service life of a franchised bus beyond 17 years;
- (b) of the procedure for applying and extending the service life of a franchised bus beyond 17 years; and
- (c) of the number of buses currently operating under such an extension and the number of extensions approved in each of the past five years, together with a breakdown by the emission standard met by the buses (set out in the table below)?

Emission Standard/ Year	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Pre-Euro					
Euro I					
Euro II					

Reply:

- (a) The franchised bus companies have committed to replacing buses before they reach 18 years old in order to maintain a proper and efficient franchised bus service to the travelling public. Buses aged 18 and above would not be allowed to operate on the road unless under very special circumstances, such as to meet unforeseen need arising from the late delivery of replacement vehicles.

(b) All franchised buses operating on the road would need to go through vehicle examination annually to certify their roadworthiness before they can be put into operation. In case of application for extending the service life of a franchised bus after reaching the age of 18, the Transport Department would vet the justifications for such applications carefully and must be satisfied that there is no reasonable alternative before granting the approval.

(c) According to our record, no franchised bus at the age of 18 and beyond was in service between 2006 and the present. There are currently 117 buses between 17 and 18 years of age operating on the road (out of a total of 5,784 buses) and the Transport Department has not received any application for extending their service life beyond the age of 18.

Ends/Wednesday, March 9, 2011

Issued at HKT 11:31