

LCQ11: Wheelchair accessible low-floor buses

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Following is a question by the Hon Albert Chan Wai-yip and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (April 6):

Question:

On May 6, 2009, I raised a question in this Council regarding the issue that most of the trips of the bus routes to and from Tin Shui Wai were not serviced by wheelchair-accessible low-platform buses. It has been learnt that as most of these trips are at present still not serviced by low-platform buses, wheelchair users often have to wait for more than 30 minutes for such buses. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the respective numbers of low-platform buses added to the fleet of each franchised bus company and the respective percentages of such addition during the two periods from May 2009 to May 2010 and from June 2010 to the present;

(b) of the daily number of trips of the bus routes to and from Tin Shui Wai which are run by low-platform buses at present, and the percentage of such number in the total number of relevant bus trips, and how such figures compare with the relevant figures in May 2009; and

(c) whether it will reconsider adding a clause to the future franchise agreements with the franchised bus companies, requiring them to retrofit facilities to all in-service non-low-platform buses to make it convenient for wheel-chaired users to board and alight buses; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) The total number of wheelchair accessible low-floor buses in the franchised bus fleet has increased from 2,892 in end-May 2009 to 3,082 in end-May 2010, and further to 3,251 in end-February 2011, representing a growth of about 6.6% and 5.5% respectively. The number of low-floor buses of the franchised bus companies is shown

at the Annex.

(b) In end-May 2009, the total number of bus trips to and from Tin Shui Wai was about 3,600 per day, of which some 2,530 trips or 70% were operated by low-floor buses. In view of the commissioning of the Kowloon Southern Link by the MTR Corporation Limited in August 2009, the services of some bus routes have been rationalised. At present, the total number of bus trips to and from Tin Shui Wai is about 3,380 per day, with some 2,600 trips or 77% made by low-floor buses. Compared with the situation in end-May 2009, the number of trips operated by low-floor buses to and from Tin Shui Wai has increased by about 70 per day.

(c) All franchised bus companies, except New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited (NLB), have agreed and implemented since 2001 that all new buses purchased as additional or replacement vehicles will be wheelchair accessible.

As regards NLB, topographical constraints make it unsuitable for wheelchair accessible low-floor buses to ply along all of its routes. However, NLB has purchased and deployed wheelchair accessible low-floor buses as far as practicable to run on routes where the terrain permits.

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