

LC: Speech by SEDL on Second Reading on Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels and Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2005

Following is the speech (translation) by the Secretary for Economic Development and Labour, Mr Stephen Ip, on Second Reading on Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels and Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2005 in the Legislative Council today (May 18):

Madam President,

I move that the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels and Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2005 be read a second time.

The Bill proposes amendments to marine legislation and other legislation, in order to bring the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap 548) (LVO) into operation.

LVO updates marine legislation to meet the modern day operational requirements of the local shipping industry and enhances the safety standards of local vessels. It has been enacted, but has not yet commenced operation as its effective implementation requires the making of ten pieces of subsidiary legislation. To date, five of them have been completed, and the remaining five will be tabled at the Legislative Council following enactment of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels and Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2005.

The Bill covers three broad categories of amendments. First, the Bill will make consequential amendments to nine pieces of ordinances and 13 pieces of subsidiary legislation affected by LVO and its subsidiary legislation.

Secondly, the Bill will propose improvements to LVO, including adding new provisions to effect the agreed policy of introducing compulsory third party risk insurance requirements for all locally certificated vessels. At present, such requirements are imposed on launches, ferry vessels and pleasure vessels. Extending such requirements to all locally certificated vessels will enhance protection for passengers. The Bill will also clarify the meaning of some provisions in LVO. For example, we propose to clarify the power of the Director of Marine to prohibit vessels from anchoring or lying, which is necessary for discharge of duties under LVO.

Thirdly, the Bill will make miscellaneous amendments to marine legislation. LVO is a dedicated piece of law for local vessels. The Director of Marine needs to rely on LVO and

other related legislation to ensure maritime safety and effective control of both local and ocean-going vessels. These miscellaneous amendments will enable the Director to discharge his duties and ensure consistency in port operation requirements which are equally applicable to both local and ocean-going vessels.

Madam President, the Bill will help ensure effective operation of LVO and provide for better control of vessels, and has the support of the local shipping industry. I recommend the Bill to this Council for early passage into law.

Ends/Wednesday, May 18, 2005

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