

Government closely monitors the situation after the implementation of urban taxis' fare adjustment

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In response to the claim by some urban taxi groups that incomes of some taxi drivers have decreased because of the new taxi fare adjustment mechanism, a Government spokesman said today (December 8) that the latest situation of taxi operation was being closely monitored and the authorities would continue to communicate with the taxi trade.

The spokesman said that the operation of taxis in Hong Kong had undergone changes over the past decade and that the development of more remote new towns and large-scale infrastructure had resulted in greater demand for long-haul public transport services. The network and quality of other public transport services have been improving with fare concessions for long-haul services. The taxi trade faces great challenges in competition within the transport industry, especially in long-haul services.

He stressed that the proposal of raising short-haul fares and lowering long-haul fares was made by the taxi trade after detailed and thorough discussions. The proposal, he said, was in line with the new taxi fare structure policy proposed by the Transport Advisory Committee after extensive consultation. The new fare structure can better reflect the actual market situation, and can effectively reduce the room for offering discounts in the trade.

Regarding the New Territories taxi fare adjustment application, the Transport Department (TD) will hold another meeting with the New Territories taxi trade associations tomorrow (December 9). The authorities will also promptly process the New Territories taxi fare adjustment application according to the established procedures. The Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council will discuss the application on Thursday (December 11). The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting originally scheduled by the

end of December will also be advanced. The application will be submitted to the Chief Executive in Council for approval after the Legislative Council and the TAC have been consulted.

The spokesman said, "The Government will draw reference to the practice and experience of other cities and study appropriate and effective measures, with a view to implementing the policy that taxi fares are charged and paid according to the meters and ensuring that market order is maintained. TD will collect views from the taxi trade through the taxi trade conferences. The situation will be reviewed in six months."

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