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24 April 2017

To,

The Secretary,
Transport and Housing Bureau,
The Government of HKSAR,
Hong Kong

Attn: Prof. Anthony Cheung

**Subcommittee on Two Proposed Resolutions under
the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance and
the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance**

Dear Prof. Cheung,

At the onset I applaud your efforts in finally putting forward the captioned resolutions to the House Committee of the Legislative Council. As a common citizen of Hong Kong, who is a regular public transport user and a law-abiding occasional private car user, I feel that these proposals are not only long overdue but much milder than they should actually be.

I live in Shatin and work in Kowloon Bay. I also need to travel often to Central, Admiralty & Wan Chai on Hong Kong Island side, and Tsim Sha Tsui on Kowloon side. Anybody with their eyes open can witness what is happening on our roads and public spaces. There is rampant disregard to traffic rules; commercial vehicles are carrying out loading / unloading activities at bus stops, private cars are waiting at no-stopping zones for pick-up / set-down, cars parked illegally, vehicles occupying yellow boxes leading to gridlocks; the list is endless. There is nothing but utter anarchy and chaos. The police, despite their best efforts, is unable to handle the situation unless they start manning all the roads. Last two weekends the public transport terminus near Shatin Village, my minibus had to drive over the pedestrian islands to reach the designated pick-up / drop-off area. On one of the occasions, a Mercedes driver had left the car illegally parked in the car pick-up / set-down area, making it impossible for a coach behind to pass through. Often, illegally parked cars on both sides of Shan Mei Street makes it impossible for my bus to pass through and because of these inconsiderate disdain for the law, my journey often takes much longer than what I could even cover on foot. Anybody who is still delusional and unable to see the elephant in the room, I shall be happy to accompany them to numerous places, almost in every district of Hong Kong, anytime and show the problem. It is quite evident that current fines are not only an inadequate deterrent but have almost become irrelevant.

In the first reading of the amended resolutions, our lawmakers almost single-handedly blamed this on insufficient parking in downtown areas. As you can see in the cases above, none of this is caused by insufficient parking. Often, parking garages nearby are lying vacant but for some inexplicable reason these owners of expensive cars find it difficult to dole out a small sum for parking garages. In the Central, Admiralty & Wan Chai area, the parking lots have adjusted the prices to keep up with the inflation and in line with the economic fundamentals of supply & demand. Because of the low fines, in many case it turns out to be more economical to park illegally than park in private car parks.

--Contd./2



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Sir, as a law-abiding citizen, I must reiterate the fact that MOBILITY IS MY RIGHT, driving is not. Nobody should be holding 90% of the 7.2 million inhabitants of Hong Kong hostage who make an absolutely right and wise choice of travelling by Public Transport daily. This is what has made Hong Kong great, ranking right at the top of Global Mobility Index. For the economic well-being of all citizens of Hong Kong, we cannot afford to squander our advantage by giving in to vested interest of the small but influential minority.

In my opinion, the penalties should have been much higher by pegging them to rise in household income instead of inflation. Household income is a better measure of relative affordability and penalties by definition have to be a deterrent. They are not part of livelihood issues affecting any law-abiding citizen. Having said that, I do feel that we should let Great to become the enemy of the Good and your effort in raising the penalties is a step in the right direction. As a car owner and regular public transport user, I do thank you for your putting these resolution across. By this letter, I also urge the Council members to fully support the resolutions and give me as well as the most of the citizens of Hong Kong, our right to mobility.

Thanks for your attention.

Your Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alok Jain'.

Alok Jain
Managing Director