

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09  
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**Reply Serial No.**

**DEVB(PL)069**

**Question Serial No.**

**0757**

Head : 82 Buildings Department                      Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme:                      Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer:                      Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau:                      Secretary for Development

Question:

For the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme, the estimated number of loan applications to be processed in 2008 is lower than the actual numbers in 2006 and 2007, while the estimated amount of loans to be approved is much reduced as compared with 2006. What are the reasons for the reduction? Will consideration be given to relax the requirements for loan application? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply:

In estimating the number of loan applications and the amount of loans to be approved under the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme (CBSILS) in 2008, we have taken into account the experience and the actual number of loan applications received in 2006 and 2007. The improved economic climate in Hong Kong and the availability of loan/grant schemes operated by other agencies in recent years are some of the possible factors which affect the number of applications under the CBSILS.

The CBSILS has a very wide coverage and provides loans to individual owners of all types of private buildings. Applicants of interest-bearing loans are not required to go through any means-test and owners who have financial difficulties may apply for interest-free loans. The scope of the Scheme comprehensively covers the safety improvement needs of a building, such as building, fire, electrical and slope safety and removal of unauthorised building works. Its scope includes repair and maintenance works carried out both under statutory orders/directions and voluntarily. We consider the current requirements and coverage of the Scheme appropriate given its nature as a loan scheme aiming at all flat owners. However, we recognise the need to provide enhanced financial assistance to elderly owners in need and have therefore proposed to implement a new Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners at a new commitment of \$1 billion.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ CHEUNG Hau-wai

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Director of Buildings

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 18 March 2008