

Action call on misleading product claims

HONGKONG should legislate on manufacturers' claims that their products are environment-friendly, says an American expert.

Josephine Cooper, a former assistant administrator at the US Environmental Protection Agency, said such legislation was important to stop consumers being misled.

However, Robert Law, deputy director of the Environmental Protection Department, said the need for such specific legislation was not so urgent.

But he agreed that Hongkong should strengthen its laws concerning

claims of commercial products in general.

Their comments come amid claims of growing abuse by manufacturers saying their products are environment-friendly.

Miss Cooper, who works for Hill and Knowlton Public Affairs Worldwide dealing with environment and energy policy, said similar laws were being implemented in some US states.

"In the United States, we have a case in which the Attorney-General sued a company that claimed the plastic bag they produced was bio-

degradable when in fact it was not true," she said.

"I think such a legislative framework is necessary in a community like Hongkong whose people are becoming more and more aware of environmental protection."

However, Mr Law said the need for such legislation was not a high priority for the official environment watchdog.

"So far, we have noticed one case relating to misleading environmental claims of a product, therefore we don't see an urgent need to rush into legislative control," he said.