

Ad hoc group
ferry

HONG KONG STANDARD
8 SEP 1992

Ad hoc group presses for stored-value ferry tickets

LEGISLATORS will vote against part of the Hong-kong Ferry Company's fare rise package unless it introduces stored-value tickets soon.

The Legislative Council ad hoc group which studied the ferry fare rise is opposed to charging increased holiday rates for outlying island passengers travelling on Saturday mornings.

Weekday charges for ordinary and deluxe classes are \$7 and \$12 respectively, rising to \$12 and \$23 on holidays.

Ad hoc group convener Albert Chan said the group had urged the company to install a stored-value ticket system, which could be more advantageous to passengers than its monthly ticket system.

He said some outlying island residents who did not travel very frequently might

not be able to fully use the discounted monthly ticket, which expired after 60 trips or after one month.

He said the suggested stored-value ticket system would limit the number of trips travelled, but would not be restricted to one month only.

If the ferry company agreed to install the system, Mr Chan said legislators would not vote against including Saturday morning trips in holiday rate brackets.

The Executive Council has approved the average 16 per cent fare rise, taking effect from 20 July.

The related legislation would only be tabled with the Legislative Council by 7 October, when the legislative session resumed.

The Council would then have 28 days to amend the provision.

Mr Chan said even if the Council voted down the fare rise package, passengers would not be refunded the extra fares paid since July.

Transport officials told the group that the Government had studied installing a stored-value ticket system that could be commonly used on all major public transportation modes.

Mr Chan said the officials indicated reservations about the ferry company installing such a system on its own, but promised to study it further.

The ad hoc group said it was unfair to use the income from outlying island services to subsidise the loss in vehicular ferry services.

The vehicular sector's loss of \$1.69 million last year was estimated to soar to \$2.17 million this year.