

The Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) reduced the number of rubbish bins in country parks and hiking trails as part of the campaign “Take your litter home”. Write a letter to the editor stating whether you are in support of this move. Justify your position with three reasons. Sign your letter Sam Chan.

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Dear Editor

I am writing to express my thoughts towards the “Take Your Litter Home” campaign launched by the Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) recently. The campaign aims at reducing the number of rubbish bins in the country parks and hiking trails with a view to reducing litter in the countryside. It strikes up controversies in society. Some say it definitely serves the purpose of protecting the environment, but some disagree, saying that it is useless and worthless. I belong to the latter group and do not support this move because of three reasons.

To begin with, reducing the amount of rubbish bins only leads to imposing heavier workload on the cleaners, making their duty become more stressful. It may not be difficult to imagine that having fewer rubbish bins means that the rubbish bins will become easily full. The cleaners need to clear the bins more frequently than before, for instance, they used to have one clean-up at an interval of 4 to 5 hours but now they have to do it every 2 to 3 hours to avoid the rubbish overflowing the bins. Besides, reducing the number of rubbish bins does not mean the cleaners can walk less as the bins are still scattered over the hill but just being placed further apart from one another. Climbing up and down the hill more frequently to collect the litter increases the workload of the cleaners tremendously. Besides imposing excessive workload on workers, the AFCD also neglects their safety. Picture the following scenario, the workers need to have clean-up under hot weather and rainy days during the summer. Increasing their workload not only results in the workers feeling exhausted and stressed, but also makes them get hurt or suffer from heatstroke more easily. Therefore, it is vital to safeguard the rights and safety of the workers.

Apart from the workers’ rights, the move cannot truly reduce litter but duplicate the amount. When people are having activities in the country parks and on hiking trails, they must have some rubbish they want to throw away. However, if there is no rubbish bin near them, what will these people do? How can AFCD ensure that they will bring along with them all the rubbish and not just leave it on the paths. It seems that the majority of the citizens in Hong Kong are leading a fast-paced lifestyle and placing efficiency at the top of their priority list. They think bringing rubbish back home is a waste of time. They will have the inertia thought that it is no big deal to just throw all the rubbish away in some hidden corners in the country park. Therefore, it only makes the hills messier and harder to clean and more rubbish will cover the plants and grass. The country parks and on hiking trails will just become some big “garbage bins”. To ensure the cleanliness of the countryside, the best way is to have more rubbish bins, so that people can easily notice them and put all the litter inside them in order not to destroy the lovely environment.

In addition, to keep the countryside clean, AFCD should not focus on the number of rubbish bins but the coverage and whether or not they can be opened by wild animals like monkeys and wild boars. As we all know, wild animals are clever nowadays, they know that opening the rubbish bins, they can find something to eat. They will “dig” deep inside the bins for food and throw all rubbish outside. It is not just littering the environment but also weakening the wild animals’ instinct for surviving in the wild. Therefore, in order to protect nature effectively, what AFCD should actually work on is to improve the design of the rubbish bins but not get off on a sidetrack, talking about reducing the number of rubbish bins.

It is hoped that AFCD could introduce some effective measures to ensure the cleanliness and protect the environment of the countryside and the hiking trails, so that both humans and wild animals could enjoy nature. I hope my opinion helps.

Yours faithfully,  
Sam Chan