

James E. Thompson
Chairman

April 2, 2002



**THE AMERICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
IN HONG KONG**

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Mr. Eddy Chan
Commissioner
Television and Entertainment Licensing
39/F, Revenue Tower
5 Gloucester Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Dear Mr. Chan:

I've received your letter of 19th March seeking the views of the American Chamber of Commerce on the Language Requirement for Domestic Free Television Programme Service. We welcome this opportunity.

Our Chamber has been an active proponent of the use of the English language in Hong Kong. We firmly believe that there will always be a direct relationship between Hong Kong's future success as world class city and the ability of its citizens to speak English well. In this regard we are strong supporters of the continuation of the requirements of the two English language TV stations, ATV and TVB, to maintain their broadcasts in the English language and we would not like to see the requirement lessened.

From discussions we have had with many local citizens of Chinese nationality we find that a number of them view the English language TV stations in Hong Kong to either improve their English or allow them to become more familiar with colloquial English which can often be found on the English language programming.

In addition, one of the initiatives of our Chamber is a mentor program with students from various Hong Kong universities. In this program our members mentor students by introducing them to their businesses – most of which is conducted in English. We've learned that most of these students also value the English language TV available to them because it gives them excellent exposure to spoken English as it is actually used in the United States, England, and Australasia. They feel it is a great benefit for them to learn how English is actually used in English speaking countries.

As you very rightly point out, there are a very large number of tourists and business visitors coming to Hong Kong all through the year. They are entitled to English Television broadcasts – beyond the cable news channels – in a city that is as international in flavour as Hong Kong. We often hear comments that it is unfortunate that world events such as the Winter Olympics cannot be viewed in Hong Kong but it can be viewed in other surrounding countries. Presumably these are commercial decisions of the TV



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stations but it is unfortunate since programmes such as this are viewed by such a large proportion of the rest of the world.

Mr. Chan, we urge your office in the strongest terms to maintain the requirement for English free-to-air television stations in Hong Kong. We, in the international community who work hard to promote Hong Kong as an international city, would love to see English language TV expanded further. We fully respect the fact that the local language is Cantonese and this is the language that the local citizens would most require and appreciate. However, we feel that Hong Kong's future requires the continuation of the English language training that has been a part of Hong Kong for many, many years and free-to air television is one of the very best mediums for the English language to develop among the citizens of this wonderful city.

The American Chamber of Commerce will also stand ready to support the efforts of your office. We have an Education Committee that meets regularly and their April meeting will deal with English in the Workplace. If you would like the views of this Committee, we can easily arrange this.

Sincerely,



James E. Thompson
Chairman