

**Embargoed until after first reading in Parliament**

## **Introduction of the Lease Agreements for Retail Premises Bill**

1. The Lease Agreements for Retail Premises Bill (“Bill”), which mandates compliance with the Code of Conduct for Leasing of Retail Premises in Singapore (“Code”) for all qualifying retail lease agreements, was read in Parliament for the first time by Minister of State (MOS) for Trade and Industry Low Yen Ling on 4 July 2023.

### Background

2. The Code, which sets out guidelines and principles to enable fairer and more balanced lease negotiations between landlords and tenants of retail premises, was introduced by the Fair Tenancy Pro Tem Committee on 26 March 2021. The Code has since been voluntarily adopted by at least nine major private sector landlords and all Government landlords.

3. The Fair Tenancy Industry Committee (“FTIC”), which comprises landlord and tenant representatives, as well as industry experts, was formed on 3 May 2021 to be the custodian of the Code. The FTIC has issued an updated version of the Code on 15 March 2022 to better cater to industry’s needs, and will continue to monitor industry feedback and address matters related to retail lease agreements.

### The Lease Agreements for Retail Premises Bill

4. The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and Enterprise Singapore (EnterpriseSG) support the Fair Tenancy Pro Tem Committee’s recommendation to make compliance with the Code mandatory for all qualifying retail tenancies, and have been working closely with the industry-led FTIC on the proposed legislation<sup>1</sup>. Members of the public were also invited to provide feedback on key provisions of the proposed legislation during a public consultation that took place between 18 July 2022 and 5 August 2022.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Fair Tenancy Pro Tem Committee, which comprised of key representatives from both the landlord and tenant communities, industry experts and members from academia, had called for Government’s support to legislate compliance with the Code.

**Embargoed until after first reading in Parliament**

5. At the Parliament Sitting on 4 July 2023, the Bill was read for the first time. Key provisions of the Bill include:

- a. Making compliance with the Code mandatory for all qualifying retail leases in Singapore.
  - If passed, the legislation is expected to come into effect about six months later. This means the Code will apply to all retail leases, with a tenure of one year or more, signed or renewed from the date of commencement of the legislation.
- b. Establishing a dispute resolution process for landlords and tenants of qualifying retail leases.
  - In a dispute, parties may be required to undergo mediation to resolve a complaint. If mediation does not result in an agreed outcome, the party that filed the complaint may apply for an adjudicator to be appointed to decide the dispute. The adjudicator's determination may be enforced as an order of the court.
- c. Setting out the function of the FTIC and the requirements relating to its composition.
  - This includes the appointment of the Chairperson and members of the FTIC which will continue to be represented by landlord and tenant communities as well as industry experts.
  - The FTIC's role will be to review and update the Code and establish the process to administer and promote the compliance of the Code by landlords and tenants.

6. MOS Low said, "The Bill marks a remarkable stride forward for our retail sector and achieves a significant milestone towards ensuring fair and balanced lease negotiations between retail landlords and tenants. From the start, a consultative and collaborative approach was taken to bring landlords and tenants to the table of discussion for a mutually agreeable code of conduct. We would like to commend the sector and its leaders, as well as the FTIC and experts, in reaching this final stage of legislation. The Bill is a result of an industry-led effort between landlords and tenants which has set a firm foundation for their strong symbiotic relationship. Stronger landlord-tenant

**Embargoed until after first reading in Parliament**

relationships and understanding will fortify our retail, lifestyle and F&B enterprises and help them weather the future better. This will benefit the retail sector, and in the long run, enhance the interest of consumers.”

7. Representatives from industry have been supportive of the Bill. Chairman of the FTIC Mr Max Loh stated, “Singapore’s landlord and tenant communities welcome the introduction of the Bill, which will mandate compliance with the Code of Conduct for Leasing of Retail Premises in Singapore. The Bill is an important milestone that marks the culmination of the hard work of representatives from Singapore’s landlord and tenant communities, industry experts and the FTIC, which will strengthen and enhance the vibrancy and competitiveness of Singapore’s retail, food & beverage (F&B) and lifestyle sectors. The FTIC is extremely appreciative of the support and guidance provided by Minister of State Low Yen Ling and her colleagues at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Enterprise Singapore in this entire process. We will continue to work closely with all stakeholders, to be an effective custodian of the Code of Conduct and ensure that the industry upholds the spirit of the Code in their lease negotiations to ensure win-win partnerships.”

8. The Code and a checklist on Code compliance are also available at <https://www.ftic.org.sg>.

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**4 July 2023**

**Embargoed until after first reading in Parliament**

***For media enquiries, please contact:***

Patrina Teng  
Senior Assistant Director  
Communications and Engagement Division  
Ministry of Trade and Industry  
Tel: 6332 7622  
E-mail: [Patrina\\_TENG@mti.gov.sg](mailto:Patrina_TENG@mti.gov.sg)

Teo Wan Gek  
Senior Assistant Director  
Communications and Engagement Division  
Ministry of Trade and Industry  
Tel: 6332 0075  
E-mail: [TEO\\_Wan\\_Gek@mti.gov.sg](mailto:TEO_Wan_Gek@mti.gov.sg)