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Panel on Environmental Affairs

meeting on 3 July 2001

**Background brief on
Impact of dredging and reclamation on the marine environment**

Background

Under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance (Cap. 499), EIAs are required for all dredging and reclamation works. These usually include computerized water quality modelling to study likely impacts on sensitive receivers, including the marine ecosystem, fisheries and fish culture zones (FCZ), gazetted beaches and water intakes. The objective of the EIA process is to protect the marine environment during the implementation of works.

Discussion at Panel meetings

2. Current dredging activities associated with the infrastructure for Penny's Bay Development were discussed by the Planning, Lands and Works Panel (PLW Panel) before the relevant funding proposal was submitted for consideration by the Public Works Subcommittee on 6 June 2001. At the PLW Panel meetings on 7 May and 4 June 2001, members expressed grave concern about the impact of dredging on the marine environment as evidenced by the fish kill incidents at Ma Wan and Cheung Sha Wan FCZs. They considered that before commencing the proposed project, the Administration should consult fishermen associations and put in place -

- effective measures to prevent fish loss arising from dredging works; and
- a mechanism acceptable both to the trade and the Administration in assessing the implications of the proposed project on the marine environment.

3. In the light of members' concern, the Administration undertook to adopt the following preventive measures to minimize the impact of the reclamation works at Yam O on the Ma Wan FCZ -

- limit dredging to the seawall foundation and adopt a non-dredge reclamation method to minimize the dredging volume;
- install silt curtain during dredging process to reduce the release of sediment to surrounding waters; and
- complete the seawall fronting the area of filling at least to a level above seawater level before commencing filling operations.

4. A comprehensive environmental monitoring and audit programme to monitor the water quality at Ma Wan FCZ would also be implemented to ensure the effectiveness of the preventive measures. The Administration also undertook to consult the mariculturists on the water quality monitoring programme, methodology and locations of the monitoring stations before commencement of the construction work.

Legislative Council Secretariat
29 June 2001