

Letterhead of Hong Kong Institute of Acoustics

28 January 2001

Mr. Andy Lau,
Clerk to Panel on Transport
Legislative Council
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,
China

By Fax: 2121 0420 and by mail

Dear Mr. Lau,

Noise impact of existing roads in Hong Kong

As you may know, the Hong Kong Institute of Acoustics (HKIOA) is a non-profit making organization with over 200 active professional members from different disciplines: architect, building services, consultancy, education, government, research and academics. The Institute aims to diffuse the knowledge and practice of acoustic and also maintain and present the integrity and status of the profession to the public and the government. You may find out more information at our web site:

<http://pacific.net.hk/~hkioa/>

In respond to an open invitation from Legco regarding the captioned issue, I would like to comment on behalf of the HKIOA members as follows:

(1) Introducing traffic management measures to restrain heavy vehicles from using certain roads at certain times

We support this initiative which has long and proven records overseas. We are of the view that traffic management measures, particularly those applied to heavy vehicles, would have considerable potentials in alleviating the disturbances and noise impacts associated with road traffic.

(2) Eliminating transport noise at source during the earliest stages of planning and designing new transport projects

We share the view that transport noise, when tackled during the planning and design stages, could be more easily dealt with as compared to "retrofitting". The government's effort since the 1980's in seeking to address this issue early while considering new transport projects is to be commended. Such effort should be kept up while attention should also be paid to explore ways to tackle existing problem areas.

(3) The effects of repeated and lengthy exposures of high levels of traffic noise on people and their health

While there are on-going research projects being conducted overseas on related issues, we are not aware of such activities locally. The general understanding at this point is that traffic noise is more a disturbance and nuisance than an acute health related issue. But it is also acknowledged that there are indications linking extended exposure to high noise levels to irritation, high blood pressure, loss of sleep, difficulty with concentration, lowered working efficiency, etc.

I understand that the deadline of submission has already passed. Nevertheless, I would appreciate it if you can bring our comments to the attention of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs and Legco Panel on Transport so that they can be discussed in the Public Meeting to be held on 7 February 2001.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. K M Li
Honourary Secretary
The Hong Kong Institute of Acoustics