

Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen, Honourable Members:

The Green Lantau Association organizes hiking and environmental activities on Lantau Island, and also monitors activities that impact the environment of the island.

When the original EIA for the International Theme Park was mooted, the GLA was very critical. There were many problems with that EIA, including bad science, misleading language, unanswered questions, and a failure to comply with the spirit or the letter of the EIA Ordinance. None of our objections received a reply, and the EIA was approved.

One problem that we overlooked was that there was a gaping hole in the EIA regarding the decommissioning of the shipyard. As Cheoy Lee had not given permission to conduct soil surveys, no one knew how bad the problem was, and therefore what environmental effects the decommissioning would have. The solution was to put this question on a shelf and deal with it in a future EIA, which we now have before us. That this decommissioning EIA would be approved as well was a foregone conclusion. No matter what was found in the soil under the shipyard, the theme park would go ahead with no delays.

As a matter of fact, the level of soil contamination was much higher than expected, with consequences not just for the Hong Kong taxpayer, who will be paying out several hundred million dollars over the original budget, but for the environment of Lantau, which will be impacted by the removal, transportation, and treatment of the soil. Much of this impact could be reduced by treating all of the soil on site, but, as with the original EIA, time (that is to say, money) is more important than the environment.

The GLA do not have the expertise to comment on the technical aspects of the decontamination process, especially since the extent of the contamination was only made public very recently despite being known to the Government for over a year. The technologies used may or may not be adequate, may or may not be safe. It hardly matters. This EIA was essentially approved before it was written, back when the original theme park EIA was approved, contracts were signed, and timetables were written in stone. The decommissioning is, to quote the Technical Memorandum, one of the "phases and key sequences" of the theme park project. Giving it its own EIA, as if it were a project that could be approved or not without reference to other projects, is a sham and a perversion of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance.