

**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs and LegCo Panel on Transport -
Joint Meeting on 24 January 2002
Protection of wetlands in Long Valley in light of the latest development of the Spur Line
Project**

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) is pleased to be invited to attend this meeting to discuss issues related to the above. The views of HKIE are given below:

1. We note the urgency of the Spur Line project. Based on data and other relevant information made available to us in connection with throughput capacity, network security and integration with Mainland, we support early commissioning of the Spur Line.
2. We consider that both viaduct and tunnel options are viable engineering solutions. Noting that the project proponent, KCRC, would probably have considerable difficulties in further substantiating their proposed environmental mitigation measures for the viaduct option, and that the tunnel option is considered a more certain option to pursue, we agree that KCRC should proceed with the tunnel scheme.
3. KCRC might wish to consider the continuance on further work for completion of the EIA report for the viaduct option as a fall-back arrangement for the tunnel scheme for the following reasons:
 - (i) the EIA report for the tunnel scheme is currently under public inspection and the time for EPD to make the decision to approve the EIA report will be some time around end of March 2002, and
 - (ii) the tunnel scheme involves a much higher capital cost which is about \$2.0 billion more than the viaduct scheme as indicated by KCRC.
4. Hydrology and ground movement are two of the many issues to be addressed for the tunnel scheme. Detailed assessments on these issues are required and success relies on sufficient site investigation, appropriate design, suitable construction method, and adequate monitoring and contingency measures. Given the ground conditions in the area of Long Valley, we are of the opinion that tunnelling works should not cause adverse effects on the local hydrology and environment, provided that the tunnel scheme is properly engineered and suitable construction techniques are used. Such tunnel construction techniques are available in Hong Kong and have been used successfully in the construction of the Tsing Tsuen tunnel, where the ground conditions are fairly similar to that in Long Valley.

We have no reason to doubt the engineering capabilities and determination of KCRC and believe that they, as a responsible large corporation, would ensure that all related concerns are properly investigated and resolved by either in-house expertise or through private specialist consultants.