

Follow-up to joint meeting on 13 December 2001

Summary of views on protection of wetlands in Long Valley in light of the latest development of the Spur Line project

Organization/ Member	Comments
Conservancy Association (LC Paper No. CB(1) 565/01-02(01))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the tunnel option does not address the need for the long-term conservation of Long Valley. The additional \$2 billion spent will not serve its purpose if the wetland character of Long Valley cannot be maintained;</li><li>- doubts the technical feasibility of the tunnel option, especially its impact on the hydrology of Long Valley. It is very difficult to monitor the change in water table during construction and operation of the railway;</li><li>- in view of the changes since the Railway Development Strategy Study II, the Government should revisit the programme planning of Northern Link and Spur Line. It is worth examining whether the Prioritized Northern Link option can replace the need for a Spur Line, as it can avoid Long Valley and save the extra \$2 billion in cost for conservation of Long Valley;</li><li>- Government should urgently adopt a conservation plan for Long Valley instead of waiting for the outcome of the nature conservation policy review;</li><li>- Government should consider setting up a trust fund for nature conservation purpose;</li></ul>

<b>Organization/ Member</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- proposed compensation for wetland loss is not always effective as in the case of the West Rail; and</li><li>- to encourage land to be managed for conservation purposes, it is necessary to change the “hope value for development” to “hope value for conservation” viz the future value of land to be acquired for conservation.</li></ul>
Friends of the Earth (LC Paper No. CB(1) 565/01-02(02))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- avoidance of Long Valley should be the top priority;</li><li>- a comprehensive long-term conservation policy is urgently needed;</li><li>- Government should set up a centralized Conservation and Heritage Trust to acquire and manage ecologically valuable habitats in the long run;</li><li>- Government should explore interim measures such as providing subsidies to interested groups to establish partnership with local people for maintaining the existing farming practices; and</li><li>- Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) does not fully consider and evaluate all possible alternative options for the Spur Line.</li></ul>

<b>Organization/ Member</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Heung Yee Kuk (LC Paper No. CB(1) 565/01-02(04))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- rights of landowners should be respected. Government should consider buying up the land, paying compensation to landowners or renting the land from landowners for conservation purpose. For Long Valley, Government should resume the land for conservation management and compensate the landowners accordingly; and</li> <li>- plans for conservation in the longer term are difficult to implement on privately owned land. The absence of statutory compensation for regulating land development in conservation areas is a cause of resentment from landowners. This will likely result in destruction of the ecology of the conservation areas, which will not be conducive to the protection of the environment.</li></ul>
Prof Billy HAU, Assistant Professor, Dept of Ecology and Biodiversity, University of Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(1) 565/01-02(05))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the ecological value of Long Valley hinges on the continued practice of wet agriculture. The ultimate goal should be to buy up the land for conservation management. Interim measures such as renting land for conservation may be considered; and</li> <li>- Long Valley with its rich habitats and the nearby old village structures of heritage value has good potential for developing into an international tourism attraction.</li></ul>

<b>Organization/ Member</b>	<b>Comments</b>
World Wide Fund For Nature Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(1) 565/01-02(03))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- disappointment over Government's inaction to secure the long-term future of Long Valley;</li><li>- Government should formulate a comprehensive conservation policy providing for land resumption and long-term management of the ecologically important areas located on private land, such as Long Valley, Sha Lo Tung etc;</li><li>- concern about the potential impacts of the bored tunnel option on the ecology of Long Valley, especially the potential hydrological problems. KCRC has yet to demonstrate with scientific data that the estimated impact on the water table is below 10mm; and</li><li>- KCRC does not fully consider and evaluate all possible alternative options for the Spur Line.</li></ul>
Kadoorie and Botanical Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- loss of fish ponds in Lok Ma Chau is also a concern.</li></ul>
Mr LAU Kong-wah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- feasibility and resource implications of the Prioritized Northern Link option and the availability of viable alternative options.</li></ul>
Ms Emily LAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- need to strike a balance between environmental protection and development. Concern about the extra time needed to find an acceptable option.</li></ul>

<b>Organization/ Member</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Mr Albert CHAN	- concern about prioritizing the investment in the protection of Long Valley over the protection of other more valuable wetlands.
Mr Andrew CHENG	- concern about the impact of the tunnel option on the water table of Long Valley.
Ms Miriam LAU	- whether the original viaduct option should be allowed to proceed and the extra \$2 billion used to resume the land at Long Valley; and  - need for early provision of both the Spur Line and the Northern Link to meet traffic demand.