

Submission to Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs

The Conservancy Association

10 April 2003

The Association understands that the Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs is invited to give views to on PWP Item 208DS “Outlying Islands sewerage, stage 1 phase 1 part 1 - Ngong Ping sewerage, sewage treatment and disposal”. The Environment, Transport and Works Bureau and Drainage Services Department also have jointly provided a paper (CB (1) 1202/02-03 (03)) for members’ reference. Whilst we support the concept of wastewater reuse in principle for the benefit of improved eco-efficiency, we would like Members to request clarification from the Administration to our following queries before giving support to this specific project.

1. Cost-effectiveness

The Association finds that the estimated project cost \$250.4 million is very high compared to a normal tertiary treatment plant of the proposed size. We have not been shown any data or feasibility study report to justify that the design and construction of the proposed plant is the most cost-effective scheme available.

2. Resource utilization

Despite the high quality of treated sewage from the proposed plant, the Administration has yet to announce how the treated sewage is going to be reused. From our discussion with MTRC and Water Supplies Department it is understood that the question of water reuse has not been fully resolved. Why should we need to spend such a huge sum of public money if the treated sewage which is supposedly as good as drinking water, is not planned to be reused fully? The government has a duty to coordinate all parties and to ensure that this precious resource is fully utilized. We also believe that Ngong Ping, as a rather self-contained development area, is a good choice to implement a demonstration project of reuse of treated sewage.

Fresh water is regarded as a kind of limited resources no different with other fuel resources. Nonetheless, the total water management issue has not been properly addressed so far. We hope that the Administration will fully make best use of the proposed Ngong Ping Tertiary Treatment plant or else the \$250.4 million can hardly be justified.

Thus we hope that the Members will request the Administration to justify the cost of the project and announce the full implementation plan of reuse of the treated sewage at Ngong Ping.