

ETWB L/M to 55/07/72

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16 November 2004

(By Fax 2577-7791)[
Ir James Y C Kwan
President
The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Dear Ir Kwan,

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

**Views and Comments on Consultation Document for
The Harbour Area Treatment Scheme Stage 2**

Thank you for the support of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers for the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS) and the phased implementation of Stage 2.

The Government is fully committed to the entire package of HATS Stage 2. However, as the institution has also agreed in your submission, it should be advisable to take the Scheme forward in two phases so that we can accord more time to plan the more complicated and costly HATS Stage 2B. Besides, there is clear evidence showing significant improvement of Victoria Harbour water quality after full commissioning of HATS Stage 1. The Government is therefore keen on keeping the momentum by proceeding with the implementation of HATS Stage 2A to bring further improvement to our harbour water quality as soon as possible while at the same time carry out the planning for the more complicated Stage 2B.

On the specific points raised in your letter, we would like to offer the following responses -

Item A.1 Water Quality Objectives and Effluent Standards

Through the EEFS and associated studies we have examined the impacts of different levels of treatment. For this purpose, specific numerical quality standards were specified for the effluent, consistent with the broad levels of treatment investigated (i.e. CEPT, basic secondary, and nutrient removal, with and without disinfection). The water quality impacts that will result from applying these standards constitute one of the key issues for debate during the public consultation process, to be integrated, of course, with consideration of the costs. Following consultation, having listened to the views of the community, we will need to decide firmly on what treatment level is to be adopted at what time. Having decided on the treatment level we will specify design effluent standards for the works to be built, and these will reflect the environmental performance that we hope to achieve. (Note: Details of the effluent standards adopted for the assessment process may be found in the technical documents for the HATS studies which have been uploaded to the website at <http://www.cleanharbour.gov.hk/english/index.html>).

Item A.2 Disinfection Requirements – Actions being taken to tackle pollution problems at the Tsuen Wan Beaches

Because of the population density in Hong Kong we have found that invariably we must try to tackle all sources of pollution if we are to bring about significant improvements to our environment. The beaches in the Tsuen Wan area are under the influence of both local pollution sources and those from further afield, such as the Stonecutters Island discharge, the continuing pollution in the harbour, and the discharge at Pillar Point. Our proposal to treat and disinfect all the sewage in the HATS service area will bring significant improvement to the Tsuen Wan beaches, but that does not mean we can neglect other sources. Accordingly we have already spent approximately \$400m on building a new sewerage system in the area of Sham Tseng and Ting Kau to tackle local sources. We have also reserved approximately another \$1b to further extend the sewerage in the beach hinterlands, and to upgrade the sewage treatment level at Pillar Point Valley.

Once again, we would like to thank you for tendering so many useful views on HATS Stage 2 and offering your support to the Government.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Doris CHEUNG)
for Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

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