

**Submission to Subcommittee on
Sewage Services (Sewage Charge) (Amendment) Regulation 2007,
Sewage Services (Trade Effluent Surcharge) (Amendment) Regulation 2007 and
Technical Memorandum on Procedures and Methods for Sampling and Analysis of Trade Effluents**

27 April 2007

**Joint Statement by Environmental Groups on
Harbour Area Treatment Scheme**

The government effort to clean up Victoria Harbour by the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (previously called Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme) commenced in 1989 and yet, after 18 years of procrastination, is far from complete.

As the only effective means to improve water quality to what Hong Kong people want, an International Review Panel of Experts recommended in 2000 the full implementation of biological treatment for all sewage discharged into Victoria Harbour without delay. Instead, the government is now proposing to implement only chemically enhanced primary treatment with chlorination disinfection (Stage 2A), and only after it obtains Legislative Council approval to increase sewage charges for the next 10 years. It refuses to make a firm commitment to biological treatment (Stage 2B) but only promises a review in 2010/11.

Compared with the fiscal surplus of \$55.1 billion last year, the investment required for full biological treatment will cost around \$2 billion per annum for the next ten years. Hong Kong has the financial muscle and the technical ability needed to implement a comprehensive solution now. Hong Kong people deserve nothing less.

We urge Government:

- 1) To comply with the recommendations of the International Review Panel of experts and commence the design and construction of both HATS Stage 2A and 2B now in one phase;
- 2) To implement a comprehensive solution that minimizes any ecological risks. A chlorine-based enhanced treatment is not the right way forward if Hong Kong is to be seen as a leading, international, environmentally responsible city in the 21st Century;

We urge legislators and political parties:

- 1) To give this issue a top priority, and to urge Government to do the same with regard to funding HATS Stage 2A and 2B fully in one phase, over and above the priority for sewage charge increase;
- 2) To insist on a clear timetable for the above;
- 3) To monitor the government's investment programme in HATS and not to relinquish any leverage it may have on the government's performance in respect of its future commitment until the full completion of HATS Stage 2.

Co-signatories:

**WWF Hong Kong
Green Student Council**

**Conservancy Association
Green Sense**