

漁農自然護理署

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Please address all replies to  
Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

覆函請寄交「漁農自然護理署署長」

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27 April 2007

Ms Miranda HON  
Clerk  
Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms HON,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the  
results of value for money audits (Report No. 48)**

**Chapter 4 : Management of government fresh food wholesale markets**

I refer to your letter under reference and provide the following information.

**Regarding the vacant piers at the Western Market**

- (a) The piers at Western Wholesale Food Market suffer from rough sea conditions generated from heavy high speed boat traffic at nearby terminals, rendering them unsuitable for wholesale use. As a result, importers have also turned to road traffic further reducing the need for these piers. The Administration has considered modifying them for freshwater fish trade, using the piers for marine refuse collection or as works depot, using the piers for other non-market related purposes, and improving the seawall for berthing of large vessels. However, all these options had not been fruitful because (i) better alternatives were available, or (ii) the options were not cost effective. A chronology of the actions taken in the last ten years is attached at Annex.

We have again approached GPA recently with a view to revitalizing the use of these piers.

(b) The usage analysis of the piers in the last 10 years is as follows.

Pier No	Usage in the last ten years (since 1997)
1	Rented out till 30 September 1999. Remained vacant thereafter.
2	Rented out till 31 January 2002. Remained vacant thereafter
3	Rented out till 30 June 2000. Remained vacant thereafter
4	Remained vacant throughout the last 10 years
5	Rented out till 31 March 2008. Currently still in use

**Regarding the estimated expenditure of \$11.4 M in 2006-07 on the market entry registration system**

(c) The breakdown of the estimated expenditure is as follows.

	CSWWFM	WWFM
Hire of security guards to implement entry registration for pedestrians on 3 shifts a day throughout the year	\$3.97 M	\$3.97 M
Hire of car park staff to implement entry registration for drivers and passengers on 3 shifts a day throughout the year	\$2.04 M	\$1.46 M
	\$6.01M	\$5.43 M
	<b>\$11.44 M</b>	

(d) The objective of the scheme is to register all visitors and users entering fresh food wholesale market to deter unscrupulous elements from using these markets for unlawful activities.

In April 2006, it was alleged that imported live freshwater fish without proper health certificates were landed at, and then distributed from fresh food wholesale markets. It reflects that there is a general need to improve access control at these markets to deter unscrupulous elements from using them for unlawful activities.

(e) The system helps to prevent people unrelated to the wholesale trades from using the markets for various other activities. It also helps law enforcement agencies to monitor illegal activities in the markets. Both the Police and the Immigration Department had made use of the data to plan and stage law enforcement operations.

Yours sincerely,



( S P LAU )

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Atg)

c.c. Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food  
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury  
Director of Audit

A Chronology of Actions Taken on the Vacant Piers  
in the last 10 years

Date	Event
Oct.1996	The matter of piers at WWFM was raised in Chapter 11 of Director of Audit's Report on Piers and Off-loading facilities at the WWFM (No.27). At that time only Pier no 4 was vacant.
21.11.96	AFCD wrote to GPA requesting consideration of other possible users for Pier no 4.
22.1.97	D of Marine visited Pier 4 but considered it not suitable for refuse collection because of the design and surrounding activities.
21.4.97	A site meeting was conducted with relevant Departments. During the meeting AFCD raised the problems/concerns of the piers in particular on the rough sea conditions resulting in (a) unsteady/unsafe working conditions, (b) greater damage to both the vessels and piers, and (c) higher operating cost on the part of the operator
23.4.97	AFCD in consultation with traders was studying the feasibility of modifying the pier to meet the needs of fresh water fish traders.
13.8.97	Fresh water fish traders submitted a proposal to modify the pier. CED and MD studied the proposal but considered it highly doubtful to be cost-effective. AFCD explored separately with CED and MD the uses of the water-frontage in WWFM.
18.9.97	A meeting was held among relevant Department to discuss modifying Pier no 4.

5.12.1997	AFCD again invited some 20 departments through GPA to indicate whether they were interested in making use of Pier no 4.
29.12.97	D of Marine in their reply to CED's study of Inner Harbour Wave and Their Reduction stated that the reduction of speed of passing vessel might not be viable and the only viable method might be adopting absorbing seawalls.
31.12.97	AFCD, CED and MD observed that there might be a growing demand for berthing of larger vessels at the seawall between the piers. The departments would assess the necessary additional seawall protection works needed, if such berthing was to be permitted on a longer term basis. AFCD planed to invite applications for using Pier no 4 for non-market related purposes.
31.1.98	CED indicated that they could use Pier 4 as their work depot
13.3.98	CED advised AFCD that their consultant, Hyder Consulting Ltd, decided to set up their depot elsewhere.
18.3.98	D of Marine concluded that in view of the low demand for water frontage cargo handling facilities in HK Island, they no longer require WWFM's piers.
14.7.1998	AFCD invited applications for using Pier no 4 for non-market related purpose.
16.7.1998	CED confirmed that they would not consider any further use of Pier no 4.
8.8.1998	GPA concluded that they could not generate any interest to take up the pier. The design and rough sea conditions in the area rendered it unsuitable.

24.9.1998	The Administration confirmed that it received no applications for using Pier No.4 for non-market related purposes. It has also considered demolishing the pier but did not consider it worthwhile because of the high costs.
8.3.1999	AFCD concluded in the Half-yearly Progress Report to the then Secretary for Economic Services that it has exhausted all ways to improve the utilization of Pier no 4 and the water frontage as far as practically possible and recommended to delete the item. The report was later submitted to the then Secretary for Treasury on 29 March 1999.
26.7.99	Renter of Pier 1 wrote to stop renting Pier 1 because of the rough sea conditions resulting in unsteady/unsafe situation for vessel approaching the piers.
23.8.99	Pier 1 was advertised for rent.
29.4.00	Renter of Pier 3 wrote to stop renting Pier 3.
23.8.00	Both Piers 1 and 3 were advertised for rent.
30.11.01	Renter of Pier 2 wrote to stop renting Pier 2.
Since 2002	Vacant piers were advertised on a regular basis inviting interested parties to rent but failed to attract any interest.