

LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs
Meeting 20 July 2007
Proposal to Construct a LNG Receiving Terminal on the Soko Islands
Submission by the Green Lantau Association

Questions for the Administration

- Why should CLP not continue to source LNG through Chinese terminals, viable options being readily available? The operators of the existing field at Yacheng which supplies Black Point have advised that field life can be extended until 2025. Alternatively Sinopec has offered to supply CLP by 2011 from their terminal being constructed on Huangmao Island (near the Sokos).
- Were a HK terminal deemed necessary, why was CLP dissuaded from opting for the Black Point option? Safe deepwater marine access can be provided from the newly constructed Tonggu Channel directly to Black Point thus removing the only apparently insurmountable objection which was marine safety in the Ma Wan Channel. Did concern by the Administration over continued legislative support from the Heung Yee Kuk enter the equation given that the Chairman's home village, Lung Kwu Tan, is 3 km from Black Point?
- Why is this extraordinarily valuable concession (the supply of LNG to the HK and regional market), under consideration for a direct grant to Exxon-CLP? It has been acknowledged by CLP that they intend to be a regional supplier of LNG. Such a concession, accompanied as it would be by a grant of possibly the only possible site for a terminal, can only be properly awarded by open tender.

Questions for this Panel

- Why did the administration shelve its marine park proposal for the Sokos in 2002, the same year that CLP commenced its site search for a HK-based terminal? The proposal to create a marine park was well founded and had reached the gazetting stage. It was clearly so delineated in Planning Department's 2001 SWNT Development Strategy Review. Had a marine park been then created, the question of a LNG terminal therein would not have arisen, being specifically excluded by the terms of the EIA Study Brief.
- In approving the EIA for the Sokos, to what extent was EPD obliged to do so by virtue of their membership of a study group which in 1998 identified the Sokos as the best HK option? The study was sponsored by EPD and carried out by CLP, Shell and Total. Did the government feel obliged to honour this earlier site selection?

Facts

- A LNG terminal is completely inappropriate in a marine park. The EIA Study Brief specifically and rightly excluded *designated* marine parks and marine reserves. Inexplicably however, *proposed* marine parks and marine reserves were not excluded from consideration. There is ample evidence that the operation of a LNG is prejudicial to marine life systems. It is instructive that worldwide there are no examples of LNG terminals in marine reserves.
- The Sokos have Visual Conservation value. On government's own Landscape Value mapping scale, the Sokos are awarded the highest value. They form a coherent and largely untouched group of islands situated 2-4km off South Lantau, itself an area long recognized for its extraordinary scenic value [*see photo*]
- The Sokos have Ecological Conservation value. The terrestrial species count alone records :-
 - 132 plant species
 - 75 bird species (11 of conservation interest)
 - 58 butterfly species (15 uncommon, 2 rare)
 - 18 dragonfly species (3 uncommon)
 - 6 amphibian species, and 8 reptile species (1 uncommon)
 - 9 freshwater fish species
- the Sokos have Heritage Conservation value There are six archaeological sites dating back to the Late Neolithic and Late Bronze age on the terminal site.
- The Sokos have Marine Conservation Value. The locality is ranked 7th of the 12 fishing zones in HK, and is vital to the continuance of the fishing industry. Rare coral species are found there. The Sokos are the only area in HK water where the Indo-Pacific humpbacked dolphin and the finless porpoise co-exist.

Fallacies

- The island of Tai A Chau has been severely degraded by the former Vietnamese refugee camp, is no longer 'pristine,' and therefore is open for development. This is simply not true. The concrete platform remaining from the camp comprises some 5 hectares only of the islands area of 120 hectares (some 4%) and could be used as a base for eco-tourism initiatives. The proposed LNG terminal would have a footprint of 38.6 hectares or 32% of the island, and irrevocably degrade the island.
- The presence of the LNG terminal will not materially affect visitors to the proposed residual marine park It is totally inconceivable that this highly visible and intrusive industrial plant would not deter all but the most avid visitors. The plant would operate 24/7, be extensively lit at light, generate on-site plant noise up to 102 decibels, and restrict both marine and terrestrial access. It will be a blot of the face of scenic South Lantau, and a lasting and highly visible testimonial to the world of how little Hong Kong values its environmental heritage.

