

長春社的信頭

Date: 11/11/1999

SUBMISSION TO LEGCO PANEL ON ECONOMIC SERVICES ON “HONG KONG DISNEYLAND” PROJECT

1. The Conservancy Association would like to voice concern over three aspects of the proposal for the Hong Kong Disneyland Project: i) the lack of project information available to the public; ii) the need for a Sustainability Impact Assessment; and iii) the absence of a land compensation and donation scheme.

Lack of Project Information

2. With a total investment of over \$20 billion required from the public purse, the Hong Kong Disneyland project is one of the biggest projects undertaken by the Government. Yet the scope and depth of project information provided to the public on this project is totally out of proportion to the size of the project. Not only have the public not been provided with a full feasibility study report, which would have been presented by the Management to the Board for any company contemplating such investments, but that not even a standard consultation document has been released. This is in stark contrast to previous infrastructure projects. For instance, the consultation papers and feasibility study reports made available to the public on the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme Stage 1, though costing much less than \$20 billion, are over several feet thick when piled together.
3. We do not think it justified for the Government to hide behind the notion of commercial secrets and to provide therefore only scanty figures without a full explanation on assumptions, methodology and analytical results. The Administration has an obligation to explain whether a full feasibility study on this project - covering the project's impact on financial, economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects, has indeed been carried out. If it has not been conducted, or only partly conducted, we suggest that Legco should delay consideration of this project until a full report is made available. If it has been conducted, we suggest that this report be made available to the public and for those sections that are deemed to contain commercial secrets, be made available to Legco members on a confidential basis.
4. We would like to emphasize that a meaningful public debate on this project could not be conducted with only scanty, piecemeal and probably one-sided information made available to the public. A well-informed public debate is of special significance to this project because the Government has never had a clear mandate to invest public money in commercial ventures. It will be ironic if the Hong Kong public, investing the lion's share of this project, is more poorly informed than some U.S. market analysts who are likely to receive detailed cash flow forecast and the like in private company briefings.

Sustainability Impact Assessment

5. Less than a month ago the Chief Executive Tung. Chee Hwa fully embraced the principle of sustainable development in his policy speech. Being the first big project announced by the Government after the speech, we believe the government has an obligation to conduct a ‘Sustainability Impact Assessment’ (“SIA”) on the project before submitting this deal to the Executive Council and Legislative Council for approval. The SIA should look at all aspects of resource consumption, energy usage, waste generation and consequential impact on local lifestyle based on the principle of sustainable development.

Land Compensation and Donation Plan

6. By its own admission, Disney purchased 8,500 acres of wildlife habitat located south of Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and donated it to the American public as a compensation for the environmental damage it created in building the Disney resort. It claimed in its own publicity material distributed last Tuesday in Hong Kong that this is “an innovative way to compensate for the Company’s development”.
7. Had the Hong Kong Disneyland project been allowed to go ahead after full consideration of its feasibility study report, the EIA report and the SIA report, it is rightful for the public to require a land compensation and donation scheme based on what The Walt Disney Company had done in the U.S.. Since the environmental damage done to Penny’s Bay could not have been reversed had the Project gone ahead, such a scheme should involve the purchase by The Walt Disney Company of private land that are of conservation value elsewhere in Hong Kong. These lands can then be donated to a conservation trust managed by an independent public body on behalf of the public at large.
8. As a preliminary suggestion for the Land Compensation and Donation Scheme, the Association would like to propose the following sites for consideration: Sha Lo Tung, Long Valley, Tai Ho Wetland at the mouth of the Tai Ho River, Deep Bay Wetland, Tai Po Kau Tsung Tsai Yuen. If such a scheme is not included as an integral component of the Project proposal, the public might have lingering doubts as to why the environment in Hong Kong is not considered as worthy as those in the U.S by the Project promoters.

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