



HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT

5TH FLOOR, HO MAN TIN GOVERNMENT OFFICES,
88 CHUNG HAU STREET, HOMANTIN, KOWLOON, HONG KONG

路政署

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24 December, 2003

Clerk to Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

(Attn: Mr. Colin CHUI)

Dear Sir,

**Re: The Director of Audit's Report on the
results of value for money audits (Report No. 41)**

Chapter 5: Provision of noise barriers for mitigating road traffic noise

Thank you for your letter dated 12 December 2003 relaying the request of the Public Accounts Committee for additional information in respect of the factors the Highways Department (HyD) had taken into account in deciding the award of the contract for the Tolo Highway widening project (THWP).

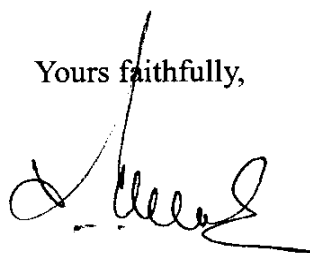
Tenders for the construction of the THWP were invited from pre-qualified contractors on 26 November 1998 and the construction contract was awarded on 26 March 1999. HyD decided to include the noise barriers concerned in the THWP contract based on the following considerations -

- (a) the approved EIA report for the THWP stated that the noise barriers were to be built as part of the THWP. Therefore, HyD had to meet the requirement;
- (b) HyD has prescribed different treatment to the noise barriers in PSK and Area 39 Development. For PSK, we had a clear programme whereas for Area 39, there was no programme at the time. Provision of noise barriers was thus treated differently in the two cases; and

- (c) tying in the construction of noise barriers with the completion date of the planned noise sensitive receivers for which the noise barriers are to be built was a permissible but not the only option at that time. In fact, it was not an option commonly adopted by the works departments at the time. In deciding which option to choose, works departments also have to take into account other considerations such as cost, disruption to traffic and nuisance to the community.

I hope the above has explained the circumstance faced by the HyD in deciding on the noise barriers in the THWP.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mak Chai-kwong', written in a cursive style.

(MAK Chai-kwong)
Director of Highways

c.c. SETW (Attn: DS(T)1
DS(E)2)