

12 April 2007

To : Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Attn : Dr Chow Yat Ngok fax 2840 0467)
Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene
(Attn : Chan Yuk Tak JP, fax 2869 0169, 2530 1368)

c.c. LegCo Panel on Food and Environmental Hygiene (fax 2537 1851)
Tuen Mun District Officer (fax 2450 3014)
The Hon Albert Ho Chun Yan (fax 2462 8368)
Tuen Mun District Councillor Miss Li Kwai Fong (fax 2114 0733)

Dear Sirs,

Objection to Sea Burials near The Brothers (大小磨刀)

I write to raise objection to sea burials in the waters near The Brothers. The reasons are as follows :-

1. The Brothers are close to a number of popular beaches in Tuen Mun. Sea burial activities in the waters near The Brothers will cause very bad psychological effects to swimmers and beach goers.
2. The Brothers can be seen directly and prominently from a number of housing estates in Tuen Mun and along Castle Peak Road. Sea burial activities in the waters near The Brothers will cause very bad psychological effects to the residents and adversely affect the value of their properties.
3. The Brothers have been destinations for watching Chinese White Dolphins for many years. Sea burials are incompatible with these original activities.
4. The waters in the vicinity of The Brothers are inner waters and are close to the Pearl River. The suspended solid content is very high. Sea burial activities will exaggerate the problem.

5. It is very difficult to control the dumping of flowers, foods and other objects into the sea when the number of sea burials is increased in future. Sea water quality will be adversely affected.
6. Owing to water current, sea burial near The Brothers may also affect the water quality in the beaches in Tsuen Wan. Many beaches in Tsuen Wan have become unsuitable for swimming due to the sewage discharge from Ngou Shuen Chau Sewage Treatment Works. The Government has done something and polluted the waters in the western part of the territory. The Government therefore should not do anything to exaggerate the problem.

Paragraph 6 of LC Paper No. CB(2)1258/06-07 (01) states that "... considering it would be inappropriate to scattering human ashes into certain waters (e.g. Victoria Harbour ...)". On the other hand, paragraph 5 of the same Paper also states that "From the perspective of public hygiene, scattering of human ashes at sea does not pose any threat to human health ...". In other words, the reasons for not allowing sea burial to take place at the Victoria Harbour are not the consideration of public hygiene. The Government understands that sea burial is an unwelcome activity, will cause very bad psychological effect to the people and will cast a negative image to the district concerned. The Government is correct in respecting residents on both sides of the Victoria Harbour. However, the Government should also respect residents of Tuen Mun. I hereby request the Government to stop allowing sea burial (viz. scattering of human ashes etc.) in the waters near The Brothers. The other three sea burial sites near Tap Mun, Tung Lung Chau and Lamma Island are close to the outer sea and are ideal sites. They should be sufficient to meet the need of the community. If necessary, the waters in the west of Lantau Island could also be a replacement sea burial site.

I am also discontented that the Government has not consulted the District Council concerned before allowing sea burial to take place near The Brothers recently.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

Kwok Ming Chi