

PI/LEGCO  
20/08/2007 16:46

To Winnie WY CHENG/LEGCO@LEGCO  
cc  
bcc  
Subject Fw: Mui Wo Ferry Merger

----- Forwarded by PI/LEGCO on 2007/08/20 PM 04:45 -----



"Jon Lewis-evans"  
2007/08/20 PM 01:47

To <kfcheng428@gmail.com>  
cc <pi@legco.gov.hk>  
Subject Mui Wo Ferry Merger

Honourable Andrew Cheng Kar-foo  
Chairman LegCo Transport Panel

Dear Sir,

Most of the recent protest about the merger of the Central/ Peng Chau and Mui Wo ferry routes has demanded "no fare increases AND no changes to schedules". As a long term resident (15 years) and medium sized Hong Kong business owner, I completely understand that no ferry operator can be expected to bid for a service that loses money, however as a South Lantau resident I would like to raise the following thought which others do not seem to mention:

In recent years, the driving force behind people moving into South Lantau has come from people seeking a different work/living environment balance. New South Lantau residents include many Chinese and expatriate families who work in the city but prefer to live in a rural community. Such "immigration" is revitalizing many South Lantau villages that were previously old and dying. The huge popular demand to buy and renovate old and unused South Lantau village properties can be seen from the very rapid rise in property prices in the last few years.

Many South Lantau residents work on Hong Kong island/ TST and commute on a daily basis by ferry from Mui Wo. This is why the fast ferries from Mui Wo at peak times are usually very busy. Using slow ferries and routing via Peng Chau will deter new city workers from moving to South Lantau, and may force current residents to leave. This will have a very detrimental effect upon the South Lantau economy.

The alternative for existing South Lantau residents will be to drive into work or commute via Tung Chung MTR. For many (especially those in the villages beyond Mui Wo) this will be much more time efficient. For example I already drive every day to my office (40 mins from Cheung Sha to Lai Chi Kok). In the event of any increased ferry journey times my wife will also drive in (40 mins drive from Cheung Sha to Central), so there will actually be a total loss of ferry revenues from people such as her. From discussions with many South Lantau resident friends this decision will be typical. **For many of us time is a precious commodity and something that we are prepared to pay for, whether through increased ferry prices or the costs of commuting by car.**

My suggestion would be that before a decision is made, an effective survey should be taken which really considers that there are many residents in South Lantau for whom time has a high premium. Rather than say "which don't you want, price rises or slower ferries", to which people will just say "both", give hard alternatives. "If you don't pay more, you will have to travel via Peng Chau". And then from a planning point of view explore the impact of that decision. "What will slower ferries mean to you as a resident? Will you travel by another method to work?"

If we simply move to less convenient slower ferries, my prediction is that the ferries will lose the custom of many residents, and long term both the economies of the ferry company and South Lantau

will suffer.

Please also forward this to other members of the Transport Panel.

Yours faithfully,

Jon Lewis-Evans  
Director  
LoJack (HK)