

Green Lantau Association
Tai O Post Office Box 6
Tai O, Lantau Island
E-mail
Telephone

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To Honourable
Ms Emily Lau Wai-hing JP
Chairman, Finance Committee
Legislative Council
Room 602, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road, Central
Hong Kong Island

By Post and Email elau@dphk.org

Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macau Bridge (HZMB)

Dear Ms Lau,

We understand that the Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee will be shortly called upon to approve funds towards the implementation of a section of the Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macau Bridge (HZMB) within Hong Kong SAR territory.

The Green Lantau Association did, during consultation with the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) and the Highways Department (HyD) express the view that the proposed HZMB is not an environmentally sustainable project in that it will greatly encourage the increased use of motor vehicles in an area of Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) that already suffers from high levels of atmospheric pollution. The inadequacy of providing a major 21st century transport link without rail capability was also pointed out to Government. We further made the point that, if built, the HZMB would facilitate the migration and establishment of polluting and energy intensive manufacturing industries in the west of the PRD thereby exacerbating direct pollution emissions from factories as well as indirect emissions from power plants that would supply those industries, which would exacerbate air pollution in the PRD generally and Hong Kong in particular.

The pressure on Hong Kong to proceed with the provision of the HZMB being of a magnitude that small voluntary green groups like GLA are unable to counter, we have at the same time engaged with HyD on the practical HZMB interconnection details within Hong Kong territory, especially the alignment of the HZMB and the choice of location for the Boundary Crossing Facility (BCF). About two years ago GLA sought to improve on then proposed HyD connections by suggesting that the BCF be combined with the portal of the planned Tuen Mun to Airport Island submarine transport link and that this combined infrastructure be placed on an artificial island to be formed to the north-east of the Airport Island. This GLA suggestion was adopted by Government and it now forms the basis on which funds will be sought from LegCo.

We have since kept ourselves updated on the efforts exerted by concern group Tung Chung Sustainable Development Alliance (TCSDA) to find alternatives to the HZMB alignment and the BCF location. For a number of conservation and visual reasons GLA had not been in favour of TCSDA earlier plans for BCF facilities to be provided on an artificial island to be located to the west of the Airport Island. Having studied TCSDA's latest planning effort that puts the BCF on land to be reclaimed in between the western ends of the airport's runways, we find this option to be potentially superior to all previously presented options, for the following reasons.

1. The proposed new reclamation would partly lean on the existing airport reclamation, hence minimising the need for the provision of retaining walls and armoured rock thereby reducing the need for rock extraction and transportation as well as reducing construction costs.
2. As it would become an integrated extension of the existing Airport Island, the visual impact of the BCF would be relatively small.
3. It would appear that hydrological changes on Tung Chung Bay and the Airport Channel arising from the proposed reclamation would be smaller than those that could arise as a result of forming a dedicated artificial island.
4. The impact on dolphin habitat would probably be smaller than that generated by a self-standing facility.
5. It would enable the re-routing of the HZMB link road to the north of the Airport Island away from the North Lantau coastline. This is a definite advantage in terms of landscape preservation, local noise and air-pollution reduction, land-use, planning and environmental protection as well as constituting a significant enhancement in the design quality of the HZMB and associated transport links.
6. The reclamation as now proposed by TCSDA would be sufficiently distant from Sha Lo Wan and Sham Wat Wan to on its own importantly add to the noise disturbance already caused by the southern runway.
7. It would obviate the need for either reclaiming the remaining relatively natural coastline on the east of the Airport Island (the former Chek Lap Kok coastline) or the construction of a bridge off that coastline.
8. It would reduce visual, air quality and noise impacts on Tung Chung while not greatly increasing those same impacts in areas to the west of the airport.

We feel that prior to the approval of more funds towards the implementation of this project, the design option raised by TCSDA should be properly evaluated by Government as it has the potential to mitigate environmental impacts on North Lantau, reduce construction costs and generally turn the current constricted and cumbersome HZMB alignment layout into a simpler, more streamlined and more elegant design.

Thank you for your kind attention and for circulating our views to honourable members of the Subcommittee.

Yours sincerely
Fabian Pedrazzini
Green Lantau Association

