

**The Legislative Council of
The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

Panel on Transport

**Public Submissions on the Ad Hoc Quota Trial Scheme for Cross-boundary Private
Cars (the Scheme)**

Summary

Phase I of the Scheme should be implemented for the following reasons :

Inequality distribution of public resources – the Government spent billions in building the Shenzhen Bay boundary crossing facilities and millions of dollar a month in staffing and maintaining its operation. The public resources are spent to facilities a limited number of privileged class of car owners whereas the majority of HK motorists are banned.

the public at large are mostly objecting to Phase II. - Phase I would not necessarily lead to a Phase II with details exactly reciprocal that of Phase I. The public concerns about road safety, air-pollution and crimes could be addressed since the traffic of phase I is minimal relative to the existing cross boundary traffic.

Myself

2. I am an ordinary citizen of Hong Kong. For leisure purposes, I travel frequently with friends between Hong Kong and the Pearl Delta Region by different means of transportation. In the past three years, I drive frequently in the region like what I have been driving in other part of the world. I witnessed the rapid development of the highway network which allows us a most convenient mean to reach places of interest in Guangdong. I am making the following submission for consideration by members of the Panel.

Inequality distribution of Public Resources

3. The Government spent billions of dollars in building the Shenzhen Bay Bridge and the cross boundary control facilities and we spend millions of dollars a month in staffing and maintaining these facilities. I would like to ask why only a limited number

people from the privileged class, who make huge investment in the Mainland and those who afford to buy a cross boundary permit at a million dollar in the black market are allowed to drive their private cars freely across. And why the majority of car owners in HK are banned from using these facilities funded by the public for visiting families, leisure or business. Such inequality is particularly significant when most of these cross boundary facilities are currently under utilized following the decline of goods vehicles traffic as a result of the development of port facilities in Shenzhen.

Phase I of the Scheme

4. I have been waiting for the Scheme for a number of years. Though two years behind schedule, I eventually see it coming to light. I could imagine that the Governments of both HK and the Mainland must have overcome lots of barrier. However, in the midst of controversies between some people of HK and some visitors from the Mainland over giving birth of babies and other cultural differences, the Scheme becomes a political issue.

5. I sincerely hope that the Government and the Legislative Council to look at the Scheme pragmatically. Phase I of the Scheme should be implemented without further deference. As I could see from news that the main argument of stopping phase I of the scheme are :

a. *phase I would definitely lead to phase II* – I tend to agree with the government that the public, particularly, the legislative council could participate in overseeing the development and modifying details to the satisfaction of the HK public before implementation of phase II. I heard a legislator, who was objecting phase I of the Scheme in a RTHK program at about 1930 hrs on 20 Feb, saying that it is not right to bar motorists from the Mainland if phase I is implemented. I wish to stress that if we look at the geographic size, convenience of public transportation, limited tourist attraction location, road capacity, etc in HK relative to those in Guangdong. There are plenty of reasons to pursue against a phase II if it is exactly reciprocal that of phase I. I think he should ask why people from HK are free to travel into the Mainland whereas people in the Mainland require an endorsement for entering into HK.

b. *public consultation has not been done* – various public and legislative council document showed that the Scheme has been discussed in legislative council for a number of years. If it was not a kind of public consultation, what are the legislators doing while sitting in the panel. The Government is issuing some 50,000 cross boundary permit a year facilitating vehicles from both HK and the Mainland travelling across the boundary. I see no reason why the Government requires a full public consultation in implementing the Scheme for issuing 50 ad hoc cross boundary permits.

c. *personal safety of HK people driving in the mainland* – traffic accidents, crimes happen every where in the world. Thousands of HK people travelling to the Mainland by

different transportation everyday. Moreover, there are thousands of private car carrying HK licence plates travelling at difference places in GD. They are not immune from traffic accident and crimes. It is not a reason to prohibit those wish to travel freely by their own car in Mainland.

Phase II

6. As shown in news report and public demonstrations, the opinion in objecting phase II of the Scheme are :

a. *air pollution* – at present there are some 20,000 vehicles travelling across the boundary to HK every day. They are virtually all using fuel from gas stations in the mainland as they are cheaper. Most of them are HK registered vehicles while some are registered in the Mainland. While looking at whether the fuel is clean enough, the target should be all these vehicles but not those 50 private cars a day participating in the Scheme. Regarding engine emission standard of Mainland vehicles, the government could impose a standard same of those registered in HK. That is restricting those vehicles (make and model) with emission level not meeting HK's standard and those vehicles manufactured not longer than six years unless it meets the standard.

b. *road safety* – in compliance with international obligations, I believe HK government would give permission to visiting foreigners, be they from America or Africa to drive if they are licensed by the authorities of where they came from. In addition to those people from the Mainland who have obtained their HK driving licence through the existing driving licence exchange scheme, I would guess the number of these foreign and mainland drivers already on the road are not small. Would legislators come up with justification for banning them from driving in HK for safety reason.

c. *crimes, breach of immigration law, smuggling* - as there are 20,000 vehicles arriving every day. I believe the Government should have adequate measures in place to enforce the laws of HK in preventing these relatively small number of vehicles being used in crimes.

7. Allowing people from the mainland driving into HK is an ultimate goal just like Mexicans driving into USA, Malaysian driving into Singapore. I am confident that the goal could be achieved with the understanding and cooperation between governments and peoples in HK and in the Mainland.

By CW Ip

22 Feb 2012