

Panel on Transport

MTR Fare Adjustment Mechanism Submission

The Lion Rock Institute, is always and in any circumstances, against any form of government price control. The "fare adjustment formula" for the Mass Transit Railways is price control exercised by the government.

We recognize the justification of price control, which is that the market for transportation has failed. But instead of the government's so called solution of price control, we believe firmly that the government should solve this failure by lifting the gates to competition and the end of the "rail first" policy.

The people of Hong Kong are the victims of the price control and rail first policy in transportation services. Which simultaneously creates shortages, whereby the mode of transport in demand, such as point to point bus services are not supplied, and excesses, such as rail services that unless government actively prevent competition, and coerce passengers onto the trains, are not demanded.

This creates massive wastages, of both societal resources when mal-invested into vanity projects like rail systems and more destructively, when passengers could not ride the mode of transport that would have existed without government intervention, time would be wasted. Imagine you were the parent of a young child, the extra time wasted by commuting on a government mandated transport could have been spent so much more productively if spent with the young child.

We are faced with this conundrum because of the government's over protection of the MTR and its suppression of other forms of transportation like the bus and minibus services. This is why we now have the coexistence of a surplus of train services and shortage of other transportation services connecting the suburbs to the city.

The fare adjustment formula is the best play of the government's denial of our right to choose how we want to travel. As a result, we are not only forced to worship the MTR as the sole method of transit, but we are also denied with the opportunity of other transportation choices that may be more applicable to our lifestyles. Because of this, we are forced to live around MTR stations so that we gain access to the city.

People who cannot access the MTR efficiently, like those who we surveyed and live in Tin Shui Wai, complain that the time spent travelling to the train station from home are equivalent if no even longer then the time spent on the train.

In other words, the MTR is a spoiled baby of the government. We, as the people, should have no reason to comply and suffer from its bully. If only the government can relax its power grip and allow those who want to serve compete between the transportation industry, our time may be used more

efficiently and more effectively. When that day comes, we will then be truly free from the government's restraint on how we want to use our time, what method of transportation we want to employ, and where we want to live in.

Hence, the discussion of the Fare Adjustment Mechanism of the MTR Corporation Limited itself, is the exact autography of the Government's facade to cover up their mess and conceal their incompetence. We, the Lion Rock Institute, as always, is opposed to any dishonesty and irresponsibility by any party. Therefore, we strongly object to the idea of a price control on MTR fares.

As a concluding note, I urge everyone involved in this decision making process, including the relevant government officials and Legislative Council members, to take a ride to Tin Shui Wai - not by your cars, but by public transportation. For it is only until you have experienced the daily lives of a civilian, you can truly understand the excruciating frustration over the waste of your precious time.