



Questions about the Shek Kwu Chau incinerator

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Dear LegCo Members,

When on February 24, you discuss the proposal to build one of the world's largest incinerators at Shek Kwu Chau, please could you consider the following aspects of this issue?

1. **It has been well-argued in press articles that the Shek Kwu Chau site was not chosen for an incinerator for environmental reasons but for narrow, politically convenient reasons.** This choice of site suggests cronyism and reflects poorly on the quality of decision making by the Hong Kong government's administration. Choice of this site, which will ruin the environment of South Lantau and Cheung Chau, will give Hong Kong a reputation for poor governance in the eyes of the general public and the international community. Hong Kong deserves better.

2. **The proposed incinerator at Shek Kwu Chau will be extremely costly.** Given the current lack of genuine responsiveness and transparency on the part of the Environment Bureau, there is no guarantee that waste from outside Hong Kong will not be imported to defray construction and running costs. And the content of this waste would be hard to verify. Why should the Hong Kong public bear this risk?

3. **Why is the EPD ignoring the strong demand from the public to recycle more waste and why are they not making much greater efforts at all levels to provide this most basic waste management infrastructure?** Recycling has not been given a proper chance. The Living Islands Movement estimates that the true recycling percentage could be less than 10%. It is also obvious from everyday observation that there is very little actual waste recycling in Hong Kong. The few "three-colour" recycling bins in use are often in obscure locations and are too small, while the public is given no guidance on what types of plastic and paper waste can be recycled and what not to put in recycling bins. The recycling bins are often overflowing and remain so for days on end.

4. **Why are there no plans for sorting of waste to divert it away from landfill or incineration?** The proposed strategy for the destruction of waste is based on sending unsorted waste to landfill or mass-burn incineration in a remote location. There are no intermediate steps between collection and dumping or burning. If the Shek Kwu Chau proposal is implemented, it will effectively rule out waste separation at source, intermediate stage sorting and the development of an effective recycling industry in Hong Kong. There will be no need for any of this if it can all just be burned. It is possible to create sustainable jobs by developing a recycling industry – most of those arising from incinerator construction will only be temporary.

5. The large-scale incinerator will result in a net daily reduction in waste of 2,000 tonnes, while actually producing around 900 tonnes per day of highly toxic waste in the form of fly ash, which will still be sent to landfill. **How can the huge economic and environmental cost of this IWMF be justified for such a small gain, which could be equally achieved through enhanced waste reduction and recycling?**

6. Moving-grate incineration only achieves a 70% reduction in the amount of waste that is burned. This is at the expense of converting some of the waste into gases that contain poisonous dioxins which are pushed into the atmosphere, and by reducing the rest to a highly toxic ash residue. The claim that this is "Modern" incineration is simply not true. **Why does**

the Bureau continue to resist other rapidly emerging technologies in the face of the growing evidence that these technologies are gaining acceptance around the world?

7. The document CB(1)931/13-14(01) under submission to LegCo is full of promises but given the apparent reluctance of the EB to engage in honest scientific debate with the environmental groups concerned, it is not clear how they could be held to these undertakings.

I would suggest that LegCo and the general public **are being asked to take far too much on trust.**

Yours sincerely,

Amanda Whitmore Snow