



Please ask the right questions on Mon 24 Feb at the EA Panel meeting

info, klclegco, yanlee, jkstolegco, vfang,
johnwright to: tkwong, kp, albert.wychan, contact,
honstevenho, frankieyick, chiwaioffice,
Cc: panel_ea, +info

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Dear Panel Member

The Friends of Sai Kung is a community organisation consisting of about 250 paid up and 1,000 Facebook members whose purpose is to preserve and improve the quality of life of Sai Kung people and to protect the unique environment.

We are a member of the Save Our Country Parks alliance.

Like many other organisations and individual members of the public, we are extremely concerned about the lack of transparency, lack of public consultation and absence of proper research in the Government's plan to build a large scale waste incinerator using twilight technology which will have serious adverse public health and environmental implications in the form of toxic fly ash and dangerous dioxins.

The EPD has not honestly evaluated this old technology, nor has it honestly considered newer, alternative technologies such as plasma gasification which are increasingly being accepted in countries which are at the forefront of safe and environmentally friendly waste disposal. In fact, many of the EPD's stated key conclusions have been proven to be false.

There is increasing increasing suspicion that the decision to build this wholly inappropriate incinerator has been taken behind the scenes to favour special interests who stand to gain huge profits at the expense of the taxpayer. This fits a pattern of many other decisions by Government and / or Government appointed bodies affecting Hong Kong's environment which will have disastrous implications for the people and the environment in the present unaccountable and non-transparent climate of governance.

At the meeting of The Panel on Environmental Affairs on Monday (24 Feb) at 2:30 pm we respectfully ask you to consider the following questions (drafted

by The Living Islands Movement with which we agree and adopt). We ask that you insist on honest answers to be given to the questions by EPD and other involved Government officials before any motion for approval is voted on.

SIX KEY QUESTIONS ON WASTE MANAGEMENT IN HONG KONG

The Bureau has admitted that their statistics for recycling are false and misleading. The previous claims that 48-52% of Hong Kong's waste is recycled have been shown to be incorrect. Waste being imported and re-exported without processing tonnage was previously added to the recycling figure but excluded from the waste generation figure. How can EPD be trusted on the Blueprint when it is based on such misleading and/or inadequate statistics?

LIM estimates that the true recycling percentage could be less than 10%. It is also clear from everyday observation that there is very little actual waste recycling in Hong Kong. The few "three-colour" recycling bins in use are mostly in obscure or difficult to get to locations, are too small and are badly designed, 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. 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?

The EPD's 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 IWMP 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. Why does the Blueprint contain no plans for sorting of waste to divert it away from landfill or incineration?

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 IWMP be justified for such a small gain, which could be equally achieved through enhanced waste reduction and recycling?

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?

Why is the Bureau leading a delegation of LegCo Members to Europe to study incinerators and alternative technologies only after seeking approval for the out-dated mass-burn incinerator?

Thank you for your attention.

John Wright

Secretary, Friends of Sai Kung