

Submission by Kellie WONG on 7 October 2014

Panel on Economic Development and Panel on Environmental Affairs

Thank you Chairman.

There is a quote by Mr. Russell Ballard, "To innovate does not necessarily mean to expand, very often it means to simplify."

What I see here is a desperate push for the Third Runway, funded by taxpayers, before properly exhausting all viable uses of the first and second runways, in resolving the increasing capacity of air traffic. As long as the fundamental problem has not been addressed, an extra or Third Runway will remain an irrelevant topic of discussion.

As it is in the Hong Kong International Airport's (HKIA) interest to make itself as attractive as possible to airlines contemplating adding services to or from Hong Kong, more cargo or passengers delivered each landing will increase the efficiency per landing. How ironic that the HKIA imposes weight-based landing charges much higher for larger aircrafts and significantly lower for smaller aircrafts. Naturally, any cost-efficient airlines has chosen to land their smaller planes on the Hong Kong runway, resulting in the highly inefficient usage of HKIA's runways.

The Lion Rock Institute aims to keep Hong Kong the shining beacon of freedom for the rest of the world, where the entrepreneurial spirit is supposedly embraced at the forefront of free markets. Surely it has occurred to the Hong Kong government that a much simpler way to accommodate increasing air traffic is simply to auction off assigned landing spots to the market, where buyers will maximize usage by landing larger planes thus increasing landing efficiency.

The difference between spending HKD136 billion on a third runway and creating extra space, versus making use of the existing space within our first and second runways through a competitive bidding process, is obvious.

At this rate, a hundred runways can be built along the remaining confines of Hong Kong to China and we will still be out of landing space. How many runways will I have to see built within my lifetime?

In sum, the proposed Third Runway should yield priority and preference to more cost-efficient and time-efficient policy options. Of course, we trust that our wise councilors would exercise the due financial prudence to uphold the overall interest of Hong Kong, in line with their duties, and let market forces do the job.