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Urgent by fax
(2543 9197)

9 June 2015

Ms Sophie LAU
Clerk to Select Committee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Lau,

**Select Committee to Inquire into the Background of and
Reasons for the Delay of the Construction of
the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong
Express Rail Link (“Select Committee”)**

Request for further information and/or documents

Thank you for your letter dated 4 May 2015. I would like to reply as follows :-

- (a) *According to the evidence given by Mr. Peter LAU Ka-keung, Director of Highways, at the public hearing held on 24 March 2015, when the monitoring and verification (“M&V”) consultant had expressed doubts over the progress of the construction programme or the effectiveness of the delay recovery measure(s) of the Hong Kong section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link project, the Highways Department would relay the doubts of the M&V consultant to the MTR Corporation Limited (“the Corporation”) for response. If the M&V consultant was not satisfied with the response of the Corporation, the Highways Department would record the relevant items, to which the doubts relate, on the “concern list”. Please provide details of those relevant items and a copy of the “concern list”.*



ISO 9001 : 2008
Certificate No.: CC 1881



ISO 14001 : 2004
Certificate No.: CC 2634

We believe that the “concern list” as mentioned in your letter refers actually to our “Issue List”. The Issue List is prepared by the M&V Consultant on a monthly basis based on the findings and observations during the course of its document reviews, site visits and audits under its monitoring and verification works. The Highways Department (“HyD”) reviews the Issue List and forwards it to MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) for response. The HyD and the M&V Consultant review MTRCL’s response to the comments and follow up with the MTRCL, through regular meetings with the MTRCL and the monitoring mechanism until we are satisfied with the response by the MTRCL. Through this arrangement, the Government communicates with MTRCL in a timely manner on major and prevailing concerns on the progress of works, technical, safety and quality issues, and the necessary follow up actions.

Please be advised that some of the issues in the above Issue List contain commercially sensitive information, the disclosure of which may prejudice Government’s position in the negotiation/settlement of claims with the contractors. Having struck a balance amongst different public interests, including facilitating the work of the Select Committee and preserving the Government’s rights in future claims, we offer to provide some samples of the issues extracted from the Issue List (at **Annex 1**) showing the comments raised by the M&V Consultant and the responses provided by the MTRCL for Members’ reference.

(b) Of the 44 meetings of the Project Supervision Committee held from January 2010 to April 2014, the date(s) of meeting(s) which the representative(s) of the Transport and Housing Bureau was/were absent from.

Out of the 44 PSC meetings held between January 2010 and April 2014, representative(s) of the Transport and Housing Bureau (“THB”) attended all of them except two, i.e. the 9th meeting held on 26 November 2010 and the 44th meeting held on 2 April 2014.

- (c) *Whether the Highways Department had critically reviewed or not the quality of site investigations carried out by the works contractors prior to civil works commencing at all the sites of the Hong Kong section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link project. If it had, details of the review. If it had not, why not.*

The HyD appointed the M&V Consultant to undertake a monitoring and verification assignment for the design and site investigation phases for the XRL project. The M&V Consultant was required to carry out assessment on the site investigation works undertaken and the geotechnical reports in accordance with the consultancy brief. The consultancy commenced in June 2009. The M&V Consultant reviewed the concerned Geotechnical Engineering Reports and Geotechnical Baseline Reports submitted by MTRCL.

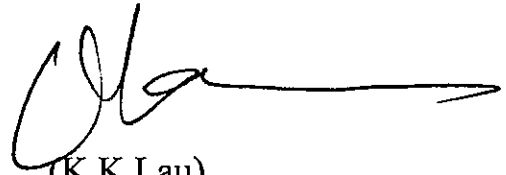
Please be advised that comments on the Reports by M&V Consultant and response on M&V Consultant's comments by MTRCL may contain commercially sensitive information, the disclosure of which may prejudice Government's position in the negotiation/settlement of claims with the contractors. Having struck a balance amongst different public interests, including facilitating the work of the Select Committee and preserving the Government's rights in future claims, we offer to provide a typical covering letter submitted by the M&V Consultant on its review findings of the documents on the Geotechnical Reports (at **Annex 2**) for Members' information.

We note from paragraph 4.11 of the first report of MTRCL's Independent Board Committee released in July 2014 that the volume of fresh bedrock that has to be excavated in the WKT north area is a known factor based on the site investigation works. It is not expected that excavation work will be particularly challenging technically but time is required to excavate the volume of rock present.

Lastly, we wish to take this opportunity to correct a typographical error in the staff cost information that was submitted via my letter dated 10 April 2015 as follows :-

The first sentence of the third paragraph should read “The annual staffing expenses for this dedicated team based on notional annual mid-point salary at 2014/15 level is about \$11.0 Million to \$11.3 Million.”

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

(K K Lau)
Director of Highways

cc Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Attn: Miss Winnie Wong)

Sample of issues extracted from the Issue List:

Contract	Observations by JCL	Response by MTRCL
824	Injection pressures of over 65 bars are proposed for pre excavation grouting, with Stop criteria set at 65 bars for 5 minutes and / or 3500 litres of grout per 20m long hole. The Specification Clause 3.23.7 limits the maximum grouting pressure for probeholes, to 20 bars. Benefits are claimed from the use of high pressure grouting, which may well be true over the majority of these tunnels, however this may not be the case in the specific vicinities of the Ngau Tam Mei shaft and the WSD Aqueduct Tunnel. This has not been addressed in this Method Statement.	The strategy report provides an overview of the grouting design and methods. More detailed method statements with regards to different sections of the works are/will be prepared. In particular there will be a separate method statement for the work in the vicinity of the WSD Aqueduct tunnel which will specify the stop criteria. The pressures in the area of the WSD aqueduct will be limited to the minimum. The grouting will commence at a lower pressure and only increased if required.
810A	Sections 3 and 4 - Serviceability: In addition to the structural capacity of the supporting elements to the traffic deck (that the report has covered), the serviceability of the deck should also be reviewed. The concern is the apparent localized movement and therefore its implications on the longitudinal alignment of the deck.	The recent daily monitoring records show that there is no significant longitudinal movement of the king posts supporting the deck.
810B	Does the proposed methodology for the construction of the seawater intake and outfall structures and modifications to the sea wall take account of the difference between the seawater level variations and the drawn down water table behind the sea wall? Are groundwater conditions being monitored at this location? What arrangements are proposed to protect the integrity of the sea wall either side of the intake and outfall during the temporary condition?	The envisaged excavation and lateral support system (ELS) has taken into account the difference between the seawater level variations and the drawn down water table behind the seawall. Standpipes and piezometers are in place in the SWIC Main Area to monitor groundwater conditions. More groundwater monitoring points will be installed around the intake / outfall culvert areas and behind the existing seawalls when the relevant site works commence. The details on the protection measures is not available at present as the construction method for the modification of existing seawall is being developed.
810A	Impact assessment: The review seemed to have focused only on the structural capacity (bending moment) of the diaphragm wall. In addition, the contractor should also review the impact of the diaphragm wall works on existing structures and facilities.	The impact of the diaphragm works on existing structures and facilities have been reviewed by the Contractor and will be updated.

List of Abbreviations:

JCL	Jacobs China Limited
MTRCL	MTR Corporation Limited
WSD	Water Supplies Department
SWIC	Sea Water Intake Culvert

JACOBS™

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12 January 2010

By E-mail and By Post

Highways Department
Railway Development Office
1/F, Homantin Government Offices
88 Chung Hau Street
Homantin
Kowloon

Our Ref: G3152/213/0268

For the attention of Mr. C T Chan

Dear Sirs,

Agreement No. CE 6/2009 (HY)
XRL - Monitoring and Verification for Design and Site Investigation Phase
Review on Consultancy Agreement No. C801 Civil and Structural Scheme Design
Further review on Geotechnical Engineering Report (Deliverable No. 2.4A)

We refer to our letter dated 1 December 2009 with our reference no. G3152/213/0199, we are pleased to submit our further review report no. G/3152/213/069 review on Consultancy Agreement No. C801 Civil and Structural Scheme Design Report Geotechnical Engineering Report (Deliverable No. 2.4A) for WKT for your reference. Please note that the MTRCL transmittal number for the report reviewed is quoted in our review report for your ease of reference.

According to our review, we have a number of additional observations made on the review and 3 of them are considered critical which need MTRCL earlier attention. The observations are marked as "Critical" in the remarks column. Therefore, we would recommend to send these observations to MTRCL for their consideration.

Please also note that this letter will supersede our letter dated 11 January 2009 with reference no. G3152/213/0261.

Should you have any queries regarding the submission, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully
For and on behalf of Jacobs China Limited


William Ng
Project Manager

WN/LSL/LCC/VS/vs

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