

For information

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Reclamation Works of the Hong Kong-Zuhai-Macao Bridge
Hong Kong Link Road Project**

Purpose

This paper provides information related to recent media reports on the extension of reclamation works at the eastern coast of the Airport Island of the Hong Kong-Zuhai-Macao Bridge (“HZMB”) Hong Kong Link Road (“HKLR”) project, alleging that it might have violated the relevant environmental permit (“EP”).

The Related Environmental Permit

2. The reclamation works at the eastern coast of the Airport Island of the HZMB HKLR project is carried out according to the environmental permit issued by the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) to the Highways Department (“HyD”) in November 2009. According to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (“EIA Report”) approved by the EPD in October 2009, the project would adopt a dredged construction method for reclamation, and would respectively affect 27 hectares and 10 hectares of seabed permanently and temporarily, i.e. the

reclamation works would involve a total of 37 hectares of seabed. The EIA Report also confirms that the seabed around the reclamation area at the eastern coast of the Airport Island is of low ecological value, and the reclamation works would not cause significant ecological impact. The EIA Report also suggests a series of relevant environmental mitigation measures.

3. The HyD subsequently submitted an application for variation of the environmental permit (“VEP”) in October 2011, proposing to adopt a non-dredged method instead of the dredged method to reclaim land and construct the seawall. The method would include constructing rock-filled platforms and stone columns for constructing the seawall. As the seabed area affected permanently and temporarily by the new method would not exceed the seabed area affected using the originally proposed dredged method, and the new method could avoid producing and disposing of a large amount of dredged sediments which would help reduce the environmental impact, the EPD agreed to the proposal and in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance, granted the relevant EP to HyD for proceeding with the works in November 2011.

Enforcement of the EP Requirements

4. Since the commencement of the HZMB construction works in 2012, the EPD has been conducting surprise on-site inspections every month to ensure all environmental mitigation measures stipulated in the EP have been implemented effectively in the construction works, in

particular to ensure that silt curtains are properly installed outside the works area which can effectively prevent sediment dispersion affecting the waters outside the works area. The EPD has been reviewing the Environmental Monitoring and Audit Reports submitted regularly by HyD to check that the specified water quality monitoring data have met the relevant standards, and to understand the progress of the works. Past inspections and environmental monitoring data showed that the silt curtains were functioning effectively and no exceedances of the relevant water quality indicators in the vicinity of the reclamation areas due to the works were noted.

5. Regarding the allegation that the extension of reclamation works might have violated the relevant requirements of the EP, the EPD noted that the temporary toe-loading-platforms constructed outside the seawall were part of the rock-filled platforms that would be constructed for constructing the seawall under the non-dredged method mentioned in the submission by HyD when applying for the variation of the environmental permit, and the area of the seabed affected permanently and temporarily was still within the affected area in the EIA Report. As mentioned in paragraph 4 above, past inspections and environmental monitoring data also showed that the silt curtains were functioning effectively and no exceedances of the relevant water quality indicators in the vicinity of the reclamation areas due to the works were noted. At present, the EPD has no evidence suggesting that the works related to the above mentioned toe-loading-platforms have contravened the EP conditions or any environmental laws.

6. The EPD is seeking further information from the HyD and the relevant contractors to verify the current findings of the incidents, and will continue to monitor the HZMB project to ensure that the project complies with the requirements of the relevant EP and environmental laws.

Environmental Protection Department
24 February 2017