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本局檔號 Our Ref.

來函檔號 Your Ref.

18 July 2017

Ms Shirley Chan
Clerk to Panel on Economic Development
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Chan,

Panel on Economic Development

Follow-up to Meeting on 24 April 2017

**Amendments to Shipping and Port Control Regulations (Cap. 313A)
and
Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) Regulation (Cap 548F)**

Further to our reply of 25 May 2017, I write to provide our comments on the Honourable Steven Ho's letter of 21 April 2017 and the suggestions made by Members at Panel meeting on 24 April 2017 concerning the proposal to establish principal fairways and a prohibited fishing area in North Lantau.

Need to Establish Principal Fairways in North Lantau

Marine traffic in North Lantau has grown substantially in the past 10 years with the development of neighbouring ports in Pearl River Delta. According to Marine Department (MD), 348 accidents occurred in the waters between North Lantau and Urmston Road Fairway in the 10-year

period from 2007 to 2016 (i.e. around 35 accidents per year). A serious collision involving a bulk carrier and a supply tug in 2008 has resulted in 18 casualties. To better regulate marine traffic and enhance safety, it is necessary to establish principal fairways in North Lantau.

Alternative Proposals Considered

In examining ways to better regulate marine traffic in North Lantau, MD has considered a number of proposals suggested by the fishing community. However, these alternatives were not practicable, as follows —

- (a) *Establishing a traffic separation scheme allowing fishing vessels to operate in the separation zone between two one-way traffic lanes for bigger vessels*

Traffic separation scheme seeks to regulate marine traffic by means of uni-directional traffic lanes with a separation zone in between. Nonetheless, this proposal is not feasible in this case as the strip of water north of Lantau (especially in the South of River Trade Terminal) is not wide enough to allow two large deep-draught vessels to navigate in opposite directions while having a separation zone in between.

- (b) *Prohibiting ocean-going or river trade vessels from travelling through North Lantau*

The proposed principal fairway is a major navigation channel for vessels going between Hong Kong and Pearl River Delta. Up to 400 such vessels pass through North Lantau every day. Disallowing them to travel through North Lantau will seriously affect port operation.

- (c) *Imposing speed limits on vessels using the navigation channel*

The purpose of establishing principal fairways is to keep marine traffic moving in an orderly manner. Imposing speed limits cannot prevent collision between large ships and fishing

vessels. Moreover, for large vessels to manoeuvre and take appropriate action in response to accident, a minimal navigational speed has to be maintained when they sail through the principal fairways. Imposing speed limit will therefore not be conducive to navigational safety.

- (d) *Allowing fishermen to fish within the principal fairways at designated time*

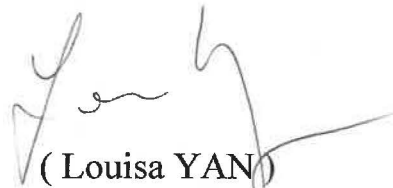
As Hong Kong port operates round the clock throughout the year and the navigation channel north of Lantau is busy most of the time, it is not possible to designate a time for fishing activities without compromising marine safety. Moreover, there will be serious traffic congestion if other vessels are suspended from using principal fairways. Operation of our port will be affected.

Impact on Fishing Activities

For safety reasons, fishing activities within principal fairways are not allowed. As the principal fairways have no physical boundaries, it is not possible to quantify the impact of the proposal on fisheries produce. Due to the high-density traffic along the proposed principal fairways and prohibited fishing areas, it is necessary to prohibit fishing activities to enhance marine safety.

Should you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact the undersigned at 3509 8162. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(Louisa YAN)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing