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8 September 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 21 July 2017

Thank you for your letter of 24 July 2017, setting out the additional information requested at the captioned meeting. With regard to **Item IV** concerning the proposed establishment of new principal fairway in North Lantau, our response is set out below.

Need to set up the fairway

Hong Kong has one of the busiest ports in the world. In 2016, the Hong Kong Port received about 99 000 cargo vessels and 86 000 passenger vessels. Coupled with daily local operations, the marine traffic in Hong Kong is very heavy. Hence, it is necessary to regulate vessels movements to enhance navigation safety by means of various measures as appropriate.

In recent years, we see an increasing marine traffic around North Lantau due to the development of neighbouring ports in Pearl River Delta ("PRD"). To maintain traffic order and enhance marine safety, we propose to establish a new principal fairway in three sections (namely Urmston Road Fairway, Castel Peak Fairway and Ha Pang Fairway). As the case in all the other 10 principal fairways in Hong Kong, fishing is prohibited along the proposed fairway in North Lantau, as well as around the intersection connecting the eastern end of the proposed Ha Pang Fairway and the existing Ma Wan Fairway and Kap Shui Mun Fairway. Given the heavy marine traffic along the

proposed fairway and the strong current inside the intersection, prohibiting fishing activities therein is essential to safeguard the safety of all vessels navigating in the area, including fishing vessels.

Suggestions to minimise the impact of the proposal to fishermen

At the meeting on 21 July 2017, fishermen expressed concerns over the possible loss of fishing ground. On the other hand, the shipping industry was concerned about the busy marine traffic in the area, and look forward to the early implementation of the proposal to enhance navigation safety. We undertook to study in earnest the suggestions raised at the meeting to minimise the impact of the proposal to the fishing industry.

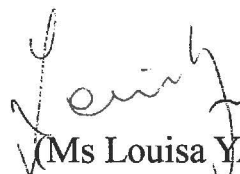
Marine Department has studied the proposed alternative to redirect marine traffic but the waters in South Lantau is found to be not deep enough for large vessels to pass through, leaving North Lantau the only waterway in the western part of Hong Kong to accommodate container vessels travelling to and from PRD. For safety reasons, we need to prohibit fishing activities inside the proposed fairway and the aforesaid intersection.

The long-term sustainability of the fishing industry in Hong Kong was raised at the meeting. To promote sustainable fishing and provide support to the fisheries industry, the Government has set up the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund to help the local fishing community move towards sustainable or high value-added operations so that the trade can enhance its overall competitiveness and cope with new challenges. In addition, the Airport Authority Hong Kong has set up the Fisheries Enhancement Fund to fund activities that will enhance fisheries resources in the vicinity of our airport, in Hong Kong western waters and further afield into the Pearl River Estuary. The fishing community may apply for these funds as they see fit.

Overall speaking, the proposal is essential in the interest of safety for both the fishing community and marine traffic. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to enhance marine safety.

Should you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact me at 3507 8162. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Louisa YAN)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing