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本局檔號 Our Ref.

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23 November 2017

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

Dear Ms Chan,

**Suggestions relating to the proposed establishment of
principal fairways in North Lantau**

Thank you for your letter of 7 November 2017, enclosing a submission from members of the public on the Government's proposal to establish new principle fairways in North Lantau. Our responses to the matters mentioned therein are set out below.

***Principal fairways in North Lantau and the routing of airport
high-speed ferries***

It has been mentioned in the submission that the purpose of the Government's proposal to establish principal fairways in North Lantau is to accommodate the route diversion of high speed ferries travelling to and from the Hong Kong International Airport SkyPier. In fact, the proposed establishment of principal fairways is not related to the route diversion of high speed ferries. The Government's proposal to establish new principal fairways in North Lantau aims to better regulate marine traffic and to enhance navigation safety. Meanwhile, the route diversion of high speed ferries travelling to and from the Hong Kong International Airport SkyPier is to reduce the disturbance to the habitat of Chinese

White Dolphins, which is one of the mitigation measures under the “Expansion of Hong Kong International Airport into a Three Runway System Environmental Impact Assessment”.

Also, to reduce the impact on Chinese White Dolphins, the routing of high speed ferries travelling to and from the Hong Kong International Airport SkyPier has been diverted from the south to the north of Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park. Other vessels are not affected by this arrangement and may continue to pass through the waters south of Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park.

The design of and international guidelines on principal fairways

The submission has also mentioned that the proposal to establish principal fairways may affect the implementation of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in Hong Kong. In fact, all vessels navigating within the principal fairways are required to comply with the relevant rules of the two aforesaid conventions, including navigating as close to the right side of the fairway as practicable and following specific procedures when overtaking other vessels.

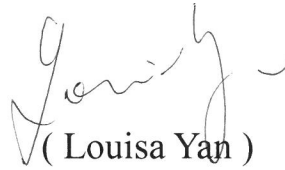
Moreover, when establishing principal fairways, the Marine Department will make reference to the Waterway Risk Assessment Program, which is a set of waterway-specific risk assessment guidelines promulgated by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities. Hence, the proposed principal fairways are in compliance with the relevant international regulations and standards.

Alternative solutions to establishing principal fairways

As an alternative option to the proposed establishment of principal fairways and the prohibited fishing area, the submission has proposed vessels to use the Shenzhen’s Tonggu Channel, which is in waters near the south of Hong Kong. In preparing the proposal to establish principal fairways in North Lantau, the Government has already considered alternative solutions as suggested by various stakeholders, including the said proposal in the submission. However, since the waters near the south of Hong Kong are not deep enough for large

ocean-going vessels to pass through, the said proposal is found not feasible. While we understand that proposal to establish principal fairways will result in a loss of fishing ground around North Lantau, the proposed arrangements to prohibit fishing activities are necessary on the ground of marine safety.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louisa Yan', with a small flourish at the end.

(Louisa Yan)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing