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**Transport and
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26 May 2022

Ms Sophie LAU
Clerk to Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms LAU,

**Changes in patronage upon the commissioning of the
East Rail Line cross-harbour extension**

Thank you for your letter dated 23 May 2022 referring the letter from Hon Stanley LI Sai-wing on the captioned issue. Having consulted the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”), our reply is as follows.

With the commissioning of the East Rail Line (EAL) cross-harbour extension on 15 May this year, the EAL became the fourth cross-harbour railway line in Hong Kong. With the cross-harbour extension, the EAL directly connects the Northeast New Territories, Central Kowloon and Hong Kong Island with four interchange stations connecting five railway lines. This provides more commuting options to members of the public, and makes railway services faster and more convenient.

According to the information provided by the MTRCL, since the commissioning of the EAL cross-harbour extension, the patronage of the critical link of the EAL during the busiest one hour in the morning peak increased by 27% from about 26 000 to 33 100 (i.e. loading of about 73% (based on 4 standing persons per square metre)). The commissioning of the EAL cross-harbour extension has brought diversion effect to the other railway lines. Based on preliminary observations, there was a drop in the patronage of the critical link of the Tsuen Wan Line by more than 20% during the morning peak, while the patronage of the critical link of the Kwun Tong Line also dropped by about 10%. The MTRCL will further elaborate the changes in passengers' travelling patterns since the commissioning of the EAL cross-harbour extension at the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways meeting on 27 May 2022.

As the EAL cross-harbour extension has just commissioned, it might take some time for passengers' travelling patterns as well as the patronage of various railway lines to stabilise. The MTRCL will continue to closely monitor changes in passengers' travelling patterns, and suitably adjust train services according to the actual situation. The MTRCL will also continue to implement various measures in a multi-pronged approach to improve passenger flow and enhance passengers' travelling experience.

Yours sincerely,

(Andreina NG)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

cc.: MTR Corporation Limited