

20 May 2009

Dear Editor,

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

We refer to the letter of Mr Martin Purbrick (*Link road for Zhuhai bridge will damage Lantau's coastline* , May 5), concerning the projects associated with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB).

The Government is committed to sustainable development. The Government's proposed layout for the man-made island for the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (HKBCF) at northeast of the airport will avoid damaging the scenic and natural Lantau coastline. We will also span the Hong Kong Link Road (HKLR) across the headland between San Shek Wan and Sha Lo Wan by a viaduct and will not affect the existing coastline.

When planning the HZMB and its related projects, we place strongest emphasis on reducing any impact on the Tung Chung and Lantau environment. We have conducted robust environmental impact assessments taking into account the cumulative impact of various projects in the area. Our prime aim, which we have substantially achieved, is to ensure that the projects will meet the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance in all aspects including those on ecology, air, water, noise and visual etc. Impact on Tung Chung residents will be minimal, since the proposed BCF will be at least 2 km afar – roughly the distance between Jordon and Central; and the proposed HKLR will be at least 700m away. To minimize the visual impact further, we have altered a short section of viaduct of the HKLR near Tung Chung to a combination of tunnel and at-grade road.

In fact, we have examined different options including the alternative route for HKLR as mentioned by Mr Purbrick. We find this route of running the HKLR along the north side of airport island not feasible since it will affect the operation and safety of the airport; cause an extra 3km detour thus increasing the social cost (e.g. time and fuel consumption) and exhausted gas emission; and cost \$13B more in construction. Such option will also require all days ventilation and lighting for the kilometers

long tunnel which will generate thousand tones of greenhouse gas annually.

Overall, the proposed layout achieves balance between development and conservation.

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