

11 May 2009

Dear Editor,

New bridge appears even more ill-conceived as details emerge

We refer to the letter of Mr Paul Zimmerman (*'New bridge appears even more ill-conceived as details emerge'*, May 7), concerning the projects associated with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB).

The Government is committed on sustainable development and has conducted robust environmental impact assessments on the cumulative impact of various projects associated with the HZMB. The findings reveal that, with effective measures, the projects will meet the EIAO on the requirements of air, noise and visual etc. Impact on Tung Chung residents will be minimal, as we put the proposed Boundary Crossing Facilities (BCF) about 2 km away from them – roughly the distance between Jordon and Central.

We have examined different options, including some of those mentioned by Mr Zimmerman, before coming up with the recommended layout. In summary, it will cause less resistance to water flow and impact on navigation safety; avoid affecting 2km natural coastline and 35 ha country park on the west Lantau; cause less impact on the dolphins populated more densely in the western water of the Airport Island; and reduce 1.8km total seawall length by combining the BCF and the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link reclamations.

We also find running the Hong Kong Link Road 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; cost \$13B more in construction; and require all days ventilation and lighting for the tunnel. Overall, the recommended proposal meets the sustainable development criteria more.

Concerning linkage with the Airport and other transport infrastructures, as mentioned in the SCMP feature of 30 April 2009, we will make use of the existing Automated People Mover to enable land-air transit passengers traveling between the BCF and the airport free of custom clearance. There will also be space reserved for the future Airport Rail Link. We have, however, no plan to link up the BCF with a new MTR system, as passengers can switch conveniently to different modes of transport at the BCF given its proximity to the Airport, the MTR Asia World Expo Station and the MTR Tung Chung Station.

Traffic study confirmed that with efficient linkage to adjoining strategic road network, the proposed BCF can cope with the passengers and traffic demand brought by the HZMB. Being strategically located within the vicinity of the Airport Terminal, Sky-pier and MTR stations, and with good connectivity with major highways, the proposed BCF will serve as a multi-modal transport hub and bring benefits to Hong Kong and the Tung Chung residents.

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