

Green Group Joint Statement

Proximity of Tung Chung East Reclamation to Marine Park Compromises Latter's Conservation Effectiveness

Thirteen green groups demand impact mitigation and compensation measures prior to construction

The proposed Tung Chung New Town Development Extension has drawn much flak and controversy over the past few years. Although the government has dropped its idea to reclaim 14 ha at the mouth of Tung Chung River west of Tung Chung, it presses on with the scheme to reclaim 145 ha to the east.

Green groups are concerned that the potential development would compromise the conservation performance of The Brothers Marine Park and impact the Chinese white dolphins. The planned reclamation east of Tung Chung takes place less than 2km away from The Brother's Marine Park which is to be designated later this year.

We urge the government to confirm effective measures before the project commences in 2017. **The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) will have a meeting to discuss the project's EIA report on 18 January 2016 (Monday). We urge the members to attach stringent mitigation and compensation measures to the EIA before its endorsement.**

During its peak construction period between mid-2018 and late-2019 (the entire project will take five years to complete), 42 to 56 construction barges would travel within and around The Brothers Marine Park every day. Worse, the construction of the Tung Chung New Town Development Extension will overlap with that of the Third Runway. **The combined marine traffic within and around The Brothers Marine Park will be as much as 200 vessels every day.** This includes construction barges, high-speed ferries, cargo ships and fishing boats.

The huge volume of marine traffic would severely disturb marine life and discourage the Chinese white dolphins, which are sensitive to noise and water quality, from returning to this once important habitat. The development's impact on the conservation performance of The Brother's Marine Park – designated to compensate for environmental degradation caused by the construction of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge – **demonstrates the lack of communication between departments.**

While we welcome the construction of **an ecological coastline along the reclaimed areas, this untried measure in Hong Kong does little to compensate for the loss in marine life and habitats.** We therefore demand the government to implement additional measures to mitigate and compensate for the development's impact to marine life, especially Chinese white dolphins, before the project commences:

1. The project's **construction barges should be barred** from the proposed The Brothers Marine Park.

2. Designate waters off Tai O in west Lantau and recently identified as a prime dolphin habitat **as a Marine Park by 2019 to make up for reclamation-induced habitat loss**. This new Marine Park can connect four others – Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau, The Brothers, SW Lantau and the vicinity of Third Runway – to create a marine protected area network for the dolphins.

Only by implementing the above could we hope to secure a sustainable future for Chinese white dolphins, and the creation of a marine habitat where they continue to live and reproduce safely.

Signatories

WWF-Hong Kong
Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong
BLOOM Association Hong Kong
Designing Hong Kong
Eco Association
Green Power
Hong Kong Outdoors
Living Seas Hong Kong
Ocean Recovery Alliance
The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
The Conservancy Association
Lantau Buffalo Association
Eco-Education and Resources Centre

-- END --

For media enquiries, please contact:

WWF-Hong Kong

Ms Joyee Chan

Communications Officer, Programme
Tel: 2864 1455 / 9201 7217
E-mail: joyeechan@wwf.org.hk

Ms Connie Tam

Assistant Communications Manager, Media
Tel: 2161 9634 / 9212 6325
Email: media@wwf.org.hk