

26th June 2016

Mr Chan Mo Po, Paul, MH, JP
Secretary for Development
Development Bureau
(E-mail: sdev@devb.gov.hk)

Dear Mr. Chan,

Joint Statement on the East Lantau Metropolis Development Plan

The undersigned concern groups object to the proposed East Lantau Metropolis (the ELM) development.

Plans, renderings and model showing the location and scale of the proposed ELM were accidentally disclosed during the recent visit of Mr. Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. However, this information was not provided to the public during the Lantau Development public consultation which ended in April.

The society has yet to be afforded sufficient time to debate the concept and necessity of the ELM. However, the government already determined to ascertain the implementation feasibility. The budget for conducting the supposedly strategic studies for artificial islands in the central waters, including the development of the ELM, was approved by the Panel on Development of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 7th April 2014. The proposed studies focus on the engineering feasibility and impact assessments, but overlook the strategic needs for the ELM. A further budget for the study, now costing \$248.7 million, has been submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee of the LegCo on 15th June 2016.

It appears that the government deliberately conceals the information and overall development plan. The necessity for the development of the ELM and the adverse impacts brought by such development are of grave concern.

We demand that the following actions are taken immediately:

1. The overall Lantau development plan, including the detailed information of ELM, should be disclosed for public inspection.

2. The new budget for strategic studies of artificial islands in the central waters, costing \$248.7 million, should be withdrawn from the Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee of the LegCo. Little supporting information to justify the need of ELM and its contributions to the long-term development of Hong Kong has been ascertained. The proposed population target of 400 to 700 thousand people have not been justified, nor has it been rationalized that the ELM can or should become Hong Kong's third Central Business District. We are very concerned that the ELM will become a giant white-elephant project whereby construction cost are not recovered and the environment permanently damaged.
3. The proposed ELM requires massive traffic and transportation facilities connecting Lantau, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and Tuen Mun. We are deeply concerned over the direct and indirect impacts of the bridges and tunnels, and the footprint of associated works including slope works. The increase in traffic and the connection to the existing road networks on Lantau will directly threaten the natural habitats especially in South Lantau, and area which lacks enforceable statutory Development Permission Area Plans. We are also concerned over the increase of vessel traffic in the surrounding waters and the threat they pose to the fisheries resources including cetaceans.
4. The ELM should be rejected as the reclamation required will lead to a large-scale direct and irreversible marine habitat loss and will bring further adverse impacts to the marine ecology and water quality.
5. The government should establish a comprehensive land database, and consider other land supply plans as alternatives, including brownfield, vacant government land, or short term tenancy (STT) sites.

Co-signatories:

Liber Research Community
Save Lantau Alliance
The Conservation Association
Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society
The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
Designing Hong Kong
Green Power
Green Peace