



Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society 香港海豚保育學會

July 6, 2011

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development Meeting on 19 July 2011

Dear Panel Chair,

HKDCS's Submission on Views of Hong Kong International Airport Master Plan 2030

Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society is a local charitable organization and is the only society dedicated to the conservation of whales, dolphins and porpoises of Hong Kong through scientific research and educating the public. In the past few weeks, the Airport Authority (AAHK) has released a consultation document to propose the construction project of building a third runway under its Master Plan 2030, which will involve a huge amount of reclamation (650 hectares) right within the habitat of our local Chinese white dolphins. We have grave concerns with this consultation process initiated by AAHK, in which AAHK deliberately avoid a detailed discussion on various potential environmental impacts caused by this infrastructure project, which could be insurmountable without some extraordinary measures. In particular, we regret to see that the consultation document deliberately trivializes the tremendous irreversible impacts on the dolphins in relation to the massive reclamation project. For example, it misleads the public by adjusting a figure presented in AFCD's report on the dolphins demonstrating that the future reclamation site was rarely used. It also failed to address the close proximity (<1 km) of the reclamation site to the adjacent marine park that has been set aside for the dolphins. Moreover, AAHK claimed that 40% of the reclamation site overlapped with the contaminated mud pits to the north of the airport, but failed to mention that in the first place it was AAHK's airport construction in the 1990s that first caused habitat deterioration in this area for the dolphins.

To refute the claim that the third runway site is not an important dolphin habitat, our dolphin experts, who have been studying the local dolphin population continuously in the past 15 years, have examined the range use of individual dolphins occurring in North and



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West Lantau waters, to investigate the proportion of individuals that may be affected by the permanent lost of 650 hectares of marine habitat. We found that over 90% of individuals occurred in North Lantau waters had ranges overlapped with the third runway site. In fact, the proposed reclamation site is situated at the centre of the three core areas used by the local dolphins, namely the Lung Kwu Chau, Brothers Islands and Tai O to Fan Lau waters. The potential blockage of these “traveling corridors” can have a serious impact on dolphin movements within Hong Kong, and potentially discourage them to use Hong Kong waters in the long run. The long-lasting impacts of the third runway project should be properly addressed by AAHK right now instead of during the EIA process, as these impacts may be too insurmountable to be overcome by any mitigation measures proposed by past EIA studies. To facilitate a fair discussion of the third runway project, AAHK should inform the general public of Hong Kong on the magnitude of negative environmental impacts posed by the huge reclamation project and its associated works, before discussing any possible options to deal with the adverse impacts on the dolphins and the marine environment.

Lastly, we urge AAHK to release the full report on the preliminary environment impact assessment mentioned in the consultation document. Without this full report, it will be difficult for the environmental and conservation groups as well as the member of the Hong Kong public to evaluate the environmental impacts and environmental costs in relation to the third runway proposal.

Regards,
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Chairman, Hong Kong Dolphin Conservation Society