

Urban (Kln.) & NT Regional Offices
7/F & 8/F Mong Kok Government Offices,
30 Luen Wan Street, Kowloon
(E-mail: tdenq@td.gov.hk)



By email only

22 July 2015

香港觀鳥會
THE
HONG
KONG
BIRD
WATCHING
SOCIETY

Since 1957 成立

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Proposal for Relaxation of Traffic Restrictions to promote Tourism and other
Development in South Lantau**

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) would like to raise our concerns on the captioned proposal.

In the proposal prepared by the Transport Department (TD), it mentioned "*as for relaxation of traffic restrictions in South Lantau, the TD considers that the measures should be in tandem with the current planning intention for preserving South Lantau as a conservation area...the scale of relaxation must not cause unacceptable negative impacts on the environment, traffic safety and the livelihood of the residents*"¹. The HKBWS notes that the TD has taken account of "The Revised Concept Plan for Lantau" published in 2007 and recognized the high conservation value of South Lantau. However, we consider that the current restriction relaxation proposal to "*promote local tourism and economy*"² is not in line with the above principles.



First, it is proposed to increase the maximum number of tour coaches that can enter South Lantau from 30 to 50 per day. We are concerned the surge in visitors on peak days could lead to adverse impacts on the residents and destruction of the natural environment in South Lantau. Carrying capacity studies for South Lantau and popular sightseeing locations (e.g. Tai O) should be conducted. More transports should not be allowed if the area cannot support the additional number of visitors, so as to ensure the long-term enjoyment of the natural environment in South Lantau for future generations.

Second, it is proposed to permit 50 private cars to enter roads in South Lantau during weekdays for recreation and leisure purpose. The document mentioned that "*most tourists visit Lantau on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. There are fewer visitors on*

¹ Paragraph 5 of Paper IDC TTC 33/2015 prepared by TD

² Paragraph 7 of Paper IDC TTC 33/2015 prepared by TD

*weekdays*³. Moreover, in June 2015, the Legislative Council discussed the increase in the number of Lantau taxi licences by about half of the existing number (i.e. 25 licences), as recommended in the TD's Public Transport Strategy Study on Taxi Service⁴. We consider that the current bus and taxi services would already be able to meet the demand, thus issuing private car weekday permits or expansion of transportation facilities are not necessary. Given the high conservation value of South Lantau, sustainable transportation should be promoted. However, in the current proposal, TD is now promoting the use of private vehicles instead of public transports. Furthermore, apart from bus services, there are other public transportation modes that can be considered for travelling to South Lantau (e.g. ferries). The proposal is not comprehensive and is misleading. We consider it is unacceptable that the "*development of local economy and tourism in South Lantau*" is promoted with the sacrifice of the ecology and environment.

Lastly, we would like to remind the TD that there is no Development Permission Area plan for South Lantau; hence, the relevant Authorities cannot carry out enforcement actions if there are any unauthorized activities in the area. There are already many suspected unauthorized land filling works/ activities on-going in South Lantau (e.g. Pui O), causing a continuous loss of ecologically valuable natural habitats, but nothing can be done by the Authorities to stop these works. We are concerned the relaxation of traffic restriction for South Lantau would lead to more unauthorised activities and the formation of more parking areas by unauthorized land filling (e.g. at Tong Fuk), adversely affecting the natural habitats and environment.

The HKBWS respectfully requests the TD to take our comments into consideration. Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours faithfully,



Woo Ming Chuan
Conservation Officer
The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

³ Paragraph 11 of Paper IDC TTC 33/2015 prepared by TD

⁴ Legco Paper - Public Transport Strategy Study on Taxi Service. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20150616cb4-1143-3-e.pdf>

cc.

Association for Tai O Environment and Development

The Conservancy Association

Designing Hong Kong

Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden

Tai O Sustainable Development Education Workshop

WWF – Hong Kong