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for information

Government policy on wetland conservation and compensation

Purpose

On 13 November 1995, the EIA subcommittee of ACE considered the EIAs for the Shenzhen River Regulation Project and Route 3 Tai Lam Tunnel Project. Members requested a position paper on Government's policy on wetland conservation and compensation.

Wetland Conservation

2. Government recognizes the ecological importance of wetlands and is committed to the protection of important wetlands in Hong Kong. Mai Po Marshes, for example, was listed as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on 4 September 1995. To establish a comprehensive conservation strategy for the area, a consultancy study will be commissioned in 1996. In addition, studies are on-going to examine the ecological value of fishponds surrounding the Marshes and assess the impact of water pollution in the Deep Bay area on the Marshes. These studies will help guide future land use, planning and conservation of the area.

3. It is Government policy to compensate for areas of conservation value lost to essential development projects. With regard to wetlands, it is our policy to try to avoid detrimental impacts on wetland considered as important. Where that is not feasible or practical, we will look at each case on its merits to determine whether any off-site mitigation measures are necessary, cost effective or practicable. Implementation of any proposed environmental mitigation measures, in line with existing policy governing public expenditure, is subject to approval by the necessary authorities, including the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council.