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Dear Environment, Transport and Works Bureau,

While it is commendable to reduce pollution, a brief cost-benefit analysis should be conducted quickly to compare the proposal with all other options for spending the money. Within the subject of pollution, I think you should compare the impact on human health of HATS vs. a scheme to reduce air pollution in the greater Pearl River Delta area. A recent report estimated that air pollution may have killed approximately 1000 people in Hong Kong in recent years. But air pollution is rapidly worsening as the number of vehicles and power plants increases dramatically in Guangdong province. The deaths due to air pollution may thus increase greatly in the future.

How many lives will be saved by HATS? Alternatively, if the money needed for HATS could instead be spent preventing air pollution, how many lives could be saved. This should be the key criterion in deciding what environmental programs to pursue first.

I'm from Southern California, where a comprehensive, regional air quality improvement program was undertaken by a powerful

cross-governmental agency and the state government. They succeeded in dramatically reducing smog while the number of vehicles increased, by the use of many measures: smog control devices on cars, including mandatory catalytic converters, special gasoline formulations, outlawing certain highly-polluting two-stroke engines, mandating high efficiency vehicles, regulating power plants, and others. Parts of the Southern California program could be copied here. The province of Guangdong should work with Hong Kong and Macau to cut air pollution by the most cost-effective means. Perhaps that would involve requiring the cleanest available diesel engines on trucks and buses, the best available smog control devices on all vehicles, requiring that a fraction of new vehicles be hybrid electric or ultra-low emission, using only natural gas instead of coal for new electric power plants, or other measures. The analysis should be conducted over the whole region without regard to political boundaries since pollution doesn't need a passport. The cheapest and most significant measures should be implemented immediately. If subsidies are necessary to carry out some measures, several billion dollars or even tens of billions of dollars would be a reasonable expense if it could prevent many thousands of deaths and improve the quality of life and attractiveness of the whole region.

Thank you,
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