

Dear Sir/Madam,

Whilst I presented my views at the forum held at the PolyU on 9th October 2004, I re-iterate, briefly, my personal views some of which are echoed in the draft HKIE paper following from that forum.

I am doubtful that the disinfection of Primary Sewage, (although from the results presented you say that with CEPT it is performing close to that of a standard secondary plant), will achieve the required effect. Whilst I do not consider myself a specialist in disinfection my knowledge from my work in North Africa in 1970's on the re-use of water for irrigation implied that effective kill of bacteria through disinfection was linked to particle size. As I understand, it will be some years before you introduce BAF and can achieve a truly lower SS. You are therefore assuming that this disinfection will have the desired effect on reducing the E coli count on the beaches in the West, the WQ of which must also be influenced by the discharge of the Pearl River. I am doubtful. Why not re-consider the original option of a long sea outfall. Are there many large harbour cities with modern programmes for sewerage and sewage treatment where primary sewage effluent is discharged in-shore?

I support the collection of the sewage from HK Island and the transfer to Stonecutters for CEPT treatment which involves deep tunnels under the harbour. From Stage 1 although there were some problems with deep tunnels under the harbour and through major faults, the understanding and technology is now I would suggest less risk prone than previous. This equally applies to tunnels to the perimeter of Hong Kong waters. Again I believe that the adoption of a long sea outfall is preferable to discharging disinfected primary sewage into harbour waters.

I support also the Polluter Pays Principle but have serious concerns that the costs here are only planned to recover OPEX and not capital depreciation. If we are serious about taking major capital works such as HATS Stage 2 off Government budget, then a fair charge to include a CAPEX element will encourage us citizens to be more prudent in our use of water which as we know is a scarce commodity not only in HK but also worldwide.

Let me in conclusion praise the efforts that the Government is taking in bringing our sewerage and sewage treatment facilities up to the standards commensurate with "Asia's World City".

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Purnell-Edwards