[redacted]

Subject: Public Consultation: HATS Stage 2

05.11.2004 10:24 AM

Dear Sir/Madam

Please see attached for your considerations my comments on behalf of the Centre for Environmental Policy and Resource Management, Department of Geography and Resource Management, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
Best regards

[redacted]

Public Consultation: The Way Forward for Stage 2 of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme

Views from Dr. Lai Pong Wai,
for and on behalf of the Centre for the Environmental Policy and Resource Management, Department of Geography and Resource Management, the Chinese University of Hong Kong

We support the recommendation for biological treatment as the target treatment level for HATS. The need for higher treatment and nutrient reduction/removal must continue to be reviewed and monitored. Victoria Harbour currently may have a low ecological value but it cannot be considered as a permanent receptor of unlimited nutrient loadings. In fact, the discharge at the proposed outfall site off Stonecutter's Island could have an impact on the nutrient levels at the western water, Lamma and even the southern water, which is at present masked by the high background nutrient levels. Putting aside the issue of causal relationship between red tides and the N/P, eutrophication is still a key issue not to be ignored in Hong Kong waters including the Victoria Harbour. We do not wish to see the picture of future beautiful waters of Victoria Harbour, being the centre piece of Hong Kong as a world city, spoiled by uncontrollable eutrophication and algal blooms.

With the vision of biological treatment as the longer term treatment level, we would accept the recommendation of the phased implementation approach. The existing CEPT treatment facilities at the Stonecutter's Island STW, which were installed at a substantial cost, are new and functioning well. It makes good sense in resource management to make best use of this existing asset, provided that it does not inhibit attainment of the ultimate goal.

Finally, for a strategic scheme such as HATS, one must not loose sight of the big picture of the Pearl River Delta. While noting the high background nutrient levels from the Pearl River, Hong Kong should, on one hand not give in to the view of "do nothing on nutrient control", and on the other hand continue the effort in collaboration with our neighbouring administrations to work out an integrated catchment plan to address the Pearl River Estuary water quality as a whole.