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16 November 2021

By Registered Post & Fax

Water Supplies Department

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance, Cap.499
Application for Approval of EIA Report**

**Project Title: Relocation of Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water
Service Reservoirs to Caverns**
(Application No. EIA-271/2021)

I refer to your above application received on 17 May 2021 for approval of an EIA report under Section 6(2) of the EIA Ordinance and our previous letter of 13 July 2021 advising you to exhibit the EIA report for public inspection in accordance with Section 6(4) of the EIA Ordinance.

Having considered the public comments received during the public inspection period, the comments from the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) given to us on 12 October 2021, and the further information submitted to us under Section 8(1) of the EIA Ordinance on 4 November 2021, I now advise you under Section 8(3) of the EIA Ordinance that the above EIA report as exhibited under Section 7(1) of the EIA Ordinance is approved. In addition, recommendations from the ACE are contained in Annex 1 for your onward action.

It should be noted that the approval of the EIA report shall not relieve you of the responsibility to comply with other legislation or Government requirements for implementing the Project.

Under Section 15 of the EIA Ordinance, the approved EIA report (Register No. : AEIAR - 232/2021) will be placed on the EIA Ordinance Register. The approved EIA report will also be placed on the EIA Ordinance website (<http://www.epd.gov.hk/eia/>).

The Legislative Council passed the Air Pollution Control (Amendment) Bill 2021 on 28 April 2021 to adopt the new Air Quality Objectives which are scheduled to come into effect on 1 January 2022. I would like to draw your attention to the attached general notice entitled "The new Air Quality Objectives and assessment of air quality impact of a project

under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499)" (Annex 2).

Should you have any queries on the above application, please contact my colleague Mr. Matthew CHAN at 2835 1155.

Yours sincerely,



(Sunny C.W. CHEUNG)

Principal Environmental Protection Officer
for Director of Environmental Protection

Encl.

c.c. (w/o encl.)

ACE EIA Subcommittee Secretariat (Attn. : Ms. Becky LAM)

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance, Cap.499
Application for Approval of EIA Report**

**Project Title: Relocation of Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water
Service Reservoirs to Caverns**

Reference of the Approved EIA Report in the Register: AEIAR-232/2021

**Recommendations from the Advisory Council on the Environment
for Carrying Out of the Project**

- (1) The project proponent is recommended to adopt the most efficient design and equipment for real-time tracking and monitoring of the air quality within the proposed caverns, including but not limited to the level of radon gas, with a view to optimising the efficiency of the ventilation / filtration in the project site and safeguarding the personnel working in the caverns;
- (2) The project proponent is recommended to devise a comprehensive risk management plan with a view to mitigating occupational safety and health hazards such as flooding or fire risks in the caverns during the construction and operation phases;
- (3) The project proponent is recommended to adopt necessary precautionary measures to prevent any wildlife from inhabiting the caverns and take appropriate remedial actions should any wildlife be found in the caverns during the construction and operation phases;
- (4) The project proponent is recommended to explore ways to facilitate the reuse and recycle of the wood generated from the felled trees in the project area as far as practicable; and
- (5) The project proponent is recommended to explore and consider the use of appropriate and additional tree species, in particular native and canopy species, for compensatory planting in the project area.

- END -

**Environmental Protection Department
November 2021**

**The New Air Quality Objectives
and assessment of air quality impact of a project under
the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (“EIAO”) (Cap. 499)**

The Legislative Council passed the Air Pollution Control (Amendment) Bill 2021 on 28 April 2021 to –

- (a) adopt the new Air Quality Objectives (“AQOs”), at **Attachment A**, with effect from 1 January 2022 in respect of the Air Pollution Control (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 and EIAO;
- (b) in relation to the EIAO, provide a transitional period to the effect that, for a project in respect of which an environmental permit (“EP”) has been issued under the EIAO before 1 January 2022, the new AQOs will not apply to an application for variation of an EP submitted within 36 months from 1 January 2022;
- (c) introduce an administrative measure that **new Government projects** for which EIA studies have not yet commenced should endeavour to adopt the new AQOs as far as practicable; and
- (d) on a best endeavours basis, a more stringent standard of 24-hour AQO for fine suspended particulates (FSP/PM_{2.5}) at a concentration level of 50 µg/m³ and the number of allowable exceedances of **18 days** per calendar year (in lieu of 35 days per calendar year as set out in the Amendment Bill) as the benchmark for conducting air quality impact assessment under the EIA studies.

2. As a general principle, a public officer shall apply the law prevailing at the time when he makes a decision. Hence, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) will make the relevant decision under the EIAO based on the AQOs prevailing at the time of the decision. Some examples of decisions made under the EIAO are the decisions under –

- (a) section 5(9), 5(10) and 5(11) as to whether to grant the permission to apply directly for an EP;
- (b) section 6(3) of the EIAO as to whether an EIA report meets the requirements of the study brief and the Technical Memorandum (“TM”) issued under the EIAO;
- (c) section 8(3) of the EIAO as to whether to approve an EIA report;
- (d) section 10(3) of the EIAO as to whether to issue an EP; and
- (e) section 13 of the EIAO as to whether to grant a variation of an EP (subject to the transitional provision referred to in paragraph 1(b) above).

Application for approval of EIA report, permission to apply directly for an EP, EP, and variation of EP

3. It is important to note that the decision of EPD under the EIAO would be based on the AQOs prevailing **at the time of the decision**, not the time when the study brief of a project is issued or the time when an application under the EIAO is submitted. After an EIA report has been submitted to EPD, we may need to consult the relevant authorities pursuant to section 9.1 of the TM. Where EPD considers that the EIA report meets the requirements of the study brief and the TM, the EIA report will need to be exhibited for public inspection and may need to be sent to the Advisory Council on the Environment. Usually it takes about 6 months before EPD decides whether to approve an EIA report. The time taken will be longer if EPD needs to seek additional information from the applicant. Hence it is possible that an EIA report submitted to EPD before the new AQOs come into operation on 1 January 2022 may be considered suitable for public inspection under the existing AQOs, but the decision as to whether to approve the EIA report will be made based on the new AQOs if and when EPD makes that decision on or after 1 January 2022 as to whether to approve the EIA report. The same applies to cases where an application for permission to apply directly for an EP is submitted to EPD before the new AQOs come into operation on 1 January 2022, but the decision as to whether to grant the permission will be made based on the new AQOs if and when EPD makes that decision on or after 1 January 2022.

4. There may also be cases where the EIA report of a project has been approved or the permission to apply directly for an EP has been granted under the existing AQOs, but EPD will make the decision as to whether to issue the EP for the construction and / or operation of the project based on the new AQOs, if that decision is made on or after 1 January 2022.

Similarly, there may also be cases where the EP of a project has been issued under the existing AQOs, but EPD will make the decision as to whether to grant a variation of the EP based on the new AQOs if that decision is made on or after 1 January 2022 (subject to the transitional provision referred to in paragraph 1(b) above).

5. If you are (or you are involved in) preparing or planning to prepare an application for approval of an EIA report, permission to apply directly for an EP, EP or variation of EP under the EIAO, you may wish to bear in mind the above and consider carefully whether your project may require decisions under the EIAO to be made after the new AQOs come into operation on 1 January 2022. If such an application is submitted after the new AQOs have come into operation, it has to contain adequate information demonstrating meeting the new AQOs. If an EIA report is submitted before the new AQOs come into operation, having regard to the possibility that decisions in relation to your project under the EIAO may be made after the new AQOs have come into operation (i.e. on or after 1 January 2022), you may consider including in the EIA report additional information to demonstrate meeting the new AQOs so that the EIA report will remain adequate for supporting future decisions of this department which may be made after the new AQOs have come into operation. Otherwise, you may be required to prepare a new EIA report with the information needed to demonstrate meeting the new AQOs.

Air quality impact assessment

6. To help those who wish to carry out an air quality assessment using the new AQOs as the criteria, this department has updated the guidelines on air quality modelling and vehicle emission calculation. They are available together with other existing guidelines at the following links:

http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide_ref/guide_aqa_model.html

http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide_ref/emfac.html

7. If you have any question on air quality impact assessment using the new AQOs as the criteria, you are welcome to contact our Ms. Emily Cheng at 2835 1221.

Enquiry

8. For matters on application for approval of EIA report, EP, and variation of EP, please feel free to contact our Ms. Clara U at 2835 1837.

The New Air Quality Objectives for Hong Kong

Pollutants	Averaging Time	Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	No. of exceedances allowed per calendar year
Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2)	10-minute	500	3
	24-hour	<u>50</u>	3
Respirable Suspended Particulates (RSP/ PM_{10})	1-year	50	Not applicable
	24-hour	100	9
Fine Suspended Particulates (FSP/ $\text{PM}_{2.5}$)	1-year	<u>25</u>	Not applicable
	24-hour	<u>50</u>	<u>35</u>
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	1-year	40	Not applicable
	1-hour	200	18
Ozone (O_3)	8-hour	160	9
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1-hour	30,000	0
	8-hour	10,000	0
Lead (Pb)	1-year	0.5	Not applicable