



BY FAX AND EMAIL

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13 June 2011

Dear Hon. Chairman and Members,

Preservation of Tung Chung River and Estuary

- 1, Regarding the “*Planning and Engineering Study on the Remaining Development in Tung Chung*”(PWSC(2011-12)24) launched by Development Bureau, two potential new town expansion areas (PNTEA) are proposed to the east and west of the existing Tung Chung Town.
2. Green Power would like to express our grave concern about the future development in Tung Chung River valley and estuary, which is covered by the western part of PNTEA.
3. Tung Chung River is renowned for its biodiversity of freshwater fish, and designated as an “Ecological Important Stream/River” by the Government. Its water quality is in pristine condition due to little human intervention. A large portion of the river landscape, including the river course, river basin and estuary still retains its natural conditions. Many valuable plant and animal species can be found in river courses, its basin and estuary.
4. Tung Chung River is home to over 20 native freshwater fish species, including Beijiang Thick-lipped Barb 北江光唇魚 (*Acrossocheilus beijiangensis*), Rice Fish 弓背青鱗 (*Oryzias Curvinotus*) and Philippine Neon Goby 菲律賓枝牙鰕虎魚 *Stiphodon atropurpureum*).

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5. Rare bird species can be found in the mature forest at Tung Chung River valley, for example, Large Grass Warbler 大草鶯(*Graminicola bengalensis*), Crested Kingfisher 冠魚狗 (*Ceryle lugubris*) and Hainan Blue Flycatcher 海南藍鶺 (*Cyornis hainanus*). Tokay Gekko 大壁虎 (*Gekko gekko*) is also a resident here.
6. Seagrasses at the river estuary at San Tau make the area a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), where the very rare Dwarf Eel grass 矮大葉藻(*Zostera japonica*) and Oval Halophila 喜鹽草(*Halophila ovalis*) thrive. The estuary provides habitats for a variety of coastal animals, such as Horseshoe Crab – which is of high local conservation value, and now breeds at only few local mudflats — and other fish, crabs and shellfish.
7. More than 80 species of butterflies have been recorded at Tung Chung and San Tau, a butterfly hotspot indeed, including 3 “Very Rare” species, i.e. Southern Chinese Peacock 穹翠鳳蝶(*Papilio dialis*), Chocolate Albatross 靈奇尖粉蝶 (*Appias lycida*), and Zebra Blue 細灰蝶 (*Leptotes plinius*), and 13 “Rare” species.
8. Tung Chung Bay at the estuary is a special wetland with 4.4-hectares of native mangrove forest, containing the most plant species of all mangroves in Hong Kong. All these contribute to the unique and rich ecological landscape of Tung Chung River. Please refer to the enclosed article (*Vol 86, Green Country, October 2010*).
9. Tung Chung River is one of the few local rivers that have not been extensively channelized. The proposed remaining development in Tung Chung over the Tung Chung River valley and estuary may greatly degrade its environmental and ecological conditions. Plants and wildlife of high ecological values will be severely interrupted as their habitats will be fragmented or destroyed.
10. In order to preserve the valuable and distinctive condition of Tung Chung River, a holistic approach should be adopted to maintain rivers’ hydrology which in brief context includes:
 - (a) natural physical geometry and substratum of river courses, i.e. river beds, river banks, its alignment and estuary,
 - (b) the permeability of river basin,
 - (c) the vegetation cover of river basin,

(d) the river water quality.

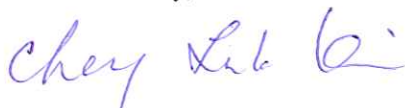
11. Regarding the preservation of Tung Chung River, Green Power would advise that

- (a) river works should be avoided as far as possible, and the natural river courses and estuary should not be altered in any scale.
- (b) landuse planning for Tung Chung River basin and estuary should take into account of its permeability, natural landscape and ecology.
- (c) sufficient vegetation cover should be maintained in the basin.
- (d) no sewage or stormwater of developed areas should be drained into Tung Chung River channel or estuary.

12. We hope the Finance Committee, Legislative Council, before making any decision to fund the “*Planning and Engineering Study on the Remaining Development in Tung Chung*”, would take the preservation of landscape and ecological values of Tung Chung River basin and estuary, which is becoming rare in the territory, into your careful consideration.

Should you have any inquiries or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (T: 3961 0200, F: 2314 2661, Email: info@greenpower.org.hk).

Yours faithfully,



Dr. CHENG Luk-ki

Division Head, Scientific Research & Conservation

On and for behalf of

Green Power