

Transcript of remarks by STH and SCED on relevant issues of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, at a media session on the relevant issues of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge this afternoon (November 9):

Reporter: On the booking service and also B5 line that you spoke about just now, are these already introduced earlier? And so what are the new steps going to be taken? How are you boosting these services? And do you have any estimate on how these measures can help divert the crowds in Tung Chung? And on Tung Chung, you mention earlier there are specific measures to reduce, to minimise the effect of queuing in the square? What exactly are the steps? And on Guangdong authorities, you have discussions with Guangdong authorities, aside from boosting advertisements and making it give orders asking local travel agencies to follow the law, are there any other steps taken by both sides of the governments to make sure that there won't be any illegal tours coming through the bridge?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: Let me first take the question regarding the B5 and B6 bus routes. The B5 bus route is basically going to the Sunny Bay whereby the passengers could transit over to the Mass Transit Railway. According to what we understand on Sunday last week, there were about 7 000 passengers going to the Sunny Bay. In respect of the bus route B6, there were roughly about 11 000 (passengers) going to Tung Chung, and roughly about 7 000 of them taking the Mass Transit (Railway) going to town. The remaining we would expect they were going over to the cable car (station), the southern Lantau and also Tai O. So, basically these passengers are having different routes to places staying around. For those who are taking the Mass Transit (Railway), they are basically taking a transfer. Therefore, if they know about the fare and the speed, then B5 would be a more preferred option to go to town.

As regard to the queuing arrangement at Tung Chung, we are making lines so that people could line up in an orderly manner. We will arrange more staff (from the operator) to help the passengers pay (the fare) and speed up the boarding because we will allow two buses to board at the same time. That would help shorten the queue and minimise the kind of impact upon the local community.

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: I just said that soon after (learning) the alleged contravention of travel agents requirements in Hong Kong, we have got in touch with the provincial authority, which is the Department of Culture and Tourism (of Guangdong Province), conveying to them our concern. The provincial authority has informed us that they have issued instructions and guidelines to all the travel agencies operating such tours to Hong Kong, reminding them that there are rules and regulations concerning the conduct of tourist guides business in Hong Kong. We don't want them to contravene these laws. If tourist groups are coming in groups through the assistance of travel agents, the preferred and recommended arrangements are that there are Hong Kong agents at the receiving end, as that would help to better organise and manage the groups, including with better planning of their sightseeing routes and transport arrangements on both coming in and returning to their home places.

The Travel Industry Council is also taking initiatives in contacting its Mainland counterparts to better dovetail their services, so as to ensure better services. All in all, the two governments and the travel businesses of both ends of the bridge are in contact and working together to ease the pressure in Hong Kong, particularly in Tung Chung. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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