

## **South China Morning Post**

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### **Phase III above dispute**

We strongly object to the allegation from Winston Chu Ka-sun of the Society for Protection of the Harbour that "the government has not properly consulted the public over the Central Reclamation Phase III" ("Beyond dispute", January 12). In fact, Phase III has gone through all the necessary consultations and fully complied with the procedures required by the law.

The current Central District (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan, which covers Phase III, was approved by the Chief Executive in Council in December 2002, after going through a due process of statutory town planning procedures and public consultation. Our public consultation has been extensive, covering the Legislative Council, the Central and Western District Council and professional bodies. There has been thorough public discussion on all the relevant matters, including the scale of reclamation and the usage of land.

After the Court of Final Appeal ruled in January 2004 that reclamation be justified on the basis of "overriding public need", we immediately reviewed Phase III. We have published a report, made public, to explain why and how Phase III fully meets this test.

In an application for judicial review filed in 2003, the Society for Protection of the Harbour sought a court order directing the Chief Executive in Council to refer the outline zoning plan to the Town Planning Board for replacement or amendment. The application was refused.

While Mr Chu may choose to maintain a different view, the fact remains – and the community is entitled to know: Phase III has gone through a due process of procedures and public consultation.

LYDIA LAM, for secretary for housing, planning and lands