



"moorem"

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To <ccc@fhb.gov.hk>

cc

bcc

Subject Public Consultation on Columbaria

Urgent

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Food and Health Bureau,

I welcome the government's public consultation reviewing its columbarium policy. Below, please find my responses to the specifics on the consultation paper.

YII It is critical that the government draft proper legislation to regulate the development of columbariums which would, among other things, clearly define "ashes and cremated remains" as "human remains" in order to then properly restrict where human remains can be stored.

YII The government must ensure that Lands Department uses its authority to resume land for breaches of lease conditions, as I understand many columbaria projects breach current zoning and lease conditions. This is critical given many developers are currently accelerating construction of columbariums to circumvent any future legislative changes and/or restrictions on their projects. In addition, the relevant government departments should take swift action to stop any columbaria construction projects that encroach on protected land or designated country parks, including land that abuts such country parks or protected land.

YII All land abutting designated country parks or protected land should immediately be rezoned to prohibit the construction of columbarium projects.

YII I favor more environmentally friendly and sustainable means for handling cremains, such as ceremonies to sprinkle the cremains at sea or in gardens or remembrance. In addition, I believe the public should be educated and encouraged to accept more environmentally friendly and sustainable means for handling cremains. Though I favor increasing the supply of public niches, I am concerned about enlarging the cemeteries currently in operation. Rather, I favor redeveloping old buildings to house such cremains as land is scarce in Hong Kong, and opportunities should be found to redevelop existing old and unused facilities for this purpose.

YII I favor the government introducing a licensing scheme setting forth criteria for qualified columbariums and regularly patrolling columbarium sites;

YII A special department should be established to aggressively prosecute (and prevent the development and operation of) illegal columbarium businesses.

YII The government should strictly enforce both the existing laws and any future legislation to forbid any continuation of development and operation of illegal columbarium

businesses which target vulnerable people at times of great loss.

Sincerely,

Melanie Moore

