

Epp, Weldon -TAPEI -GR

From: Epp, Weldon -TAPEI -GR
Sent: October 18, 2001 8:24 PM
To: Mitchell, James -TAPEI -GR
Subject: FW: Mackay Exhibit: going, going...

Importance: High

FYI...just so you know where things stand.

-----Original Message-----

From: Epp, Weldon -TAPEI -GR
Sent: October 18, 2001 8:17 PM
To: Mulrone, David -MDM
Cc: Teo, Owen -MDM; EXTOTT (MDM); Murphy, Dave -TAPEI -TD; Lipman, Ted -TAPEI -HOM/CDM; McDowell, Mark -AGA
Subject: Mackay Exhibit: going, going...
Importance: High

David:

I hope you'll forgive me for taking your time with a personal note on a museum exhibit when APEC, PM's Shanghai visit, and I'm sure many other items are crowding your agenda. However, knowing how much CTOT and you personally have invested in the success of the Mackay exhibit, I thought you might appreciate the choice of intervening at this critical juncture should you choose. A phone call to ROM President William Thorsell may prove of assistance at this time when we may be only days away from a (I believe premature) decision to recall the exhibit. A short sitrep follows; my latest message to ROM/Rahimi is attached below for your reference.

Regards,

Weldon

(consulted: D. Murphy)

Summary: The question of the Mackay exhibit touring beyond Shung Ye now hinges on two questions: (i) adequate interim storage; (ii) the ability for the Kaohsiung and Taichung venues to convince ROM that their venues will meet ROM's standards. In the meantime ROM personnel (Chris Palmer) arrived in Taipei this week and has begun taking down and packing the exhibit into crates, either for storage or shipping. Pre-empting an understanding that we would first try to resolve question (i) while ROM/Palmer is in Taipei, ROM Director of Collections Mr. Dan Rahimi, has now asked us to begin arrangements for the exhibit to be immediately returned to Canada.

Background: Since HOM's letter to ROM/Thorsell and my report two weeks ago (both cc'd to you), ROM has shown new signs of fatigue with the Mackay exhibit tour. Despite the fact that Kaohsiung's overdue facility report failed ROM's test, and Taichung's overdue report was only submitted today, I had convinced ROM/Rahimi to store the exhibit in Taiwan (at Shung Ye) until further negotiations with Kaohsiung and/or Taichung could take place. If the other venues are ultimately deemed by ROM to be inadequate, the exhibit would be shipped back to the ROM immediately. We arranged for HOM to meet with the ROM earlier this week; since Thorsell was not in town he met with Rahimi and several other senior managers. Rahimi reiterated to HOM his commitment to temporarily delay a recall decision, and HOM underscored the bigger picture (15,000+ visitors; VIPs from President on down; strong community support; win-win for the institutions, aboriginal community, and for Canada-Taiwan, etc.).

Since HOM's meeting (during the last 24 hours) it appears to us - based on e-mail and conversations with several ROM staff - that ROM Collections are predisposed towards bringing the exhibit home immediately whatever the circumstances. They appear to have lost any interest in providing further support to the exhibit touring in Taiwan. I was told today that Collections feels the whole exhibit has been "too much trouble" and "not worth it". The relevant ROM manager - Dan Rahimi - appears to have reached a threshold where additional technical requests are just what he is waiting for to pull the plug on the matter. For example the latest sticking point for ROM/Collections is the stacking of several of the crates for storage - though ROM/Palmer assured me on-site today that based on his experience this should be a non-issue; after all, crates are stacked during air transport.

Conclusion/Proposal: ROM is on the brink of recalling this exhibit prematurely over a question of a few metres of