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the late David Brower
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the late Dr. Malcolm C. Coulter
Specialist Group on Storks,
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SAVE International

(Spoonbill Action Voluntary Echo)

A Project of Earth Island Institute

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行政院院長 毛治國

The Honorable Mao Chi-kuo, Premier, Executive Yuan
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Dear Premier Mao, Minister Chen, and Director-General Hsieh:

I am writing again on behalf of SAVE International to urge you to disavow and dismantle the airstrip being built at the Southwest Coast National Scenic Area (SWCNSA) near Ding-shan Village. Even though the airstrip has undergone no environmental review or public comment, it is already more than half-built; 500 meters of a probable 800-meter length have been graded, compacted, and edged in rock, according to members of SAVE International's Advisory Committee who recently visited the site. The airstrip undermines the reputation that the SWCNSA has gained, in Taiwan and around the world, for tourism based on authentic cultural and ecological heritage. Instead, the airstrip will burden the local residents with additional noise and pollution, and it will threaten the local population of endangered Black-faced Spoonbills.

This airstrip sets a dangerous precedent of cheapening a thoughtful long-term plan for short-term gain, by trying to attract an exclusive class of wealthy "air tourists" rather than the populist variety of tourists who want to experience the authentic local culture or ecology. Protecting and enhancing cultural resources and the environment are foremost among the goals in the master plan for the SWCNSA. Previous developments according to the SWCNSA's plan have used science and local wisdom to foster cultural tourism and eco-tourism. This tourism has brought in substantial investment from the public and private sectors to create projects that are successful yet sophisticated and respectful to local residents and wildlife.

As you know, the Black-faced Spoonbill has been central to the success of the SWCNSA and many tourism-based businesses of Tainan, Chiayi, and Yunlin counties. People all over Taiwan recognize the *hei mien pi lu* and are proud of what their leaders and fellow citizens are doing to preserve this species. This airstrip and its ensuing growth in "air tourism" could dramatically damage how visitors perceive the SWCNSA and the Taiwanese government's fundamental role in protecting endangered species and the country's ecosystem.

SAVE International has been involved in protecting the Black-faced Spoonbill in Taiwan since 1997. We use a combination of land-planning, science, and democratic design to create sustainable alternative plans that benefit people, spoonbills, and the larger ecosystem in Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. We help people to understand that healthy wetlands are good for the economy as well as for the environment, and the economies of these areas have benefitted from locally-based tourism.

This is not the first proposed airport in Tainan County that SAVE has studied and opposed. Indeed, SAVE and our colleagues at the University of California, Berkeley, published a report in 2003 about an airport proposed for this same area. The ensuing noise, pollution, and sprawl development from that airport would have ruined the qualities that local residents hold dear and that bring tourists to the area, including the presence of endangered Black-faced Spoonbills. Here is a direct link to the report in electronic form on our website: https://savespoonbills.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/la205_2003report_tainanairport.pdf

The Executive Committee of SAVE International is unanimously outraged at this unsanctioned airstrip. We at SAVE hope that you will remove the airstrip and restore our trust in Taiwan's leadership in protecting habitat for the Black-faced Spoonbill.

I look forward to hearing from you immediately. If you have questions regarding this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me at the addresses above.

Respectfully,

Derek Schubert
President, SAVE International

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