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## \$7 flag fall for NT, Lantau taxis

By WONG JOON SAN

THE Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) yesterday endorsed an increase in the flag fall for New Territories and Lantau taxis from the present \$5.50 to \$7.

It also endorsed a 10 cents increase for every subsequent quarter kilometre, taking it to 80 cents.

Waiting time was increased by 10 cents to 80 cents per minute.

The cost for each piece of luggage and a radio call was doubled to \$2.

Taxi operators and drivers had demanded that the flag fall be raised from \$5.50 to between \$7.50 and \$9.50,

and that the fare for every subsequent quarter kilometre go up by 20 cents to 90 cents.

On May 1, the TAC also endorsed increasing the flag fall for urban taxis from \$6.50 to \$8 as well as a 10 cents increase for every subsequent 250 metres to 90 cents. The new fares came into effect on May 13.

The chairman of the Joint Conference for the Concern of Taxi and Minibus Affairs, Mr Choi Kwok-hung, said the taxi trade was likely to accept the approved rates.

The TAC said its recom-

mendations had considered the policy of establishing a substantial fare difference between taxis and other transport, the effect of increased operating, maintenance and fuel costs, and the need to have an acceptable level of taxi service in the New Territories and on Lantau.

The new fares are expected to be implemented in mid-June.

The TAC was also briefed on the first section of a two-part management study commissioned by the China Motor Bus Company aimed at improving its services.

The usual news conference held after TAC meetings was cancelled by its chairman, Miss Maria Tam Wai-chu.

Reporters were told to be content with the press release.

But a source speculated that TAC members involved in politics did not want to talk to the press about fare increases, because they were afraid it would affect their political careers.

The source said although taxi fare increases had been approved, there had been much criticism in the media that taxi services had not improved.