

All day, all night proposal for roadworks

By Michael Smith

WHILE the sound of roadworks is enough to drive anyone crazy during the day, the noises of drills and excavators could soon echo through Hong Kong's night.

The government revealed yesterday it was considering the introduction of a 24-hour roadwork program to avoid traffic disruptions during the day.

The announcement came as legislators approved a \$281.6 million program for the reconstruction of seven major roads in the territory but expressed concern about the disruption it would have on traffic.

Secretary for Works James Blake said the Department of Works and the Department of Transport was studying the implementation of a 24-hour road construction program.

The findings of the inter-departmental study would be handed to legislators by March.

He said the study was looking into new types of "quiet" working equipment and the use of sound barriers to protect Hong Kong people as they sleep.

But the cost-effectiveness of the move is yet to be determined.

Mr Blake said the need for after-hours roadworks would have to be balanced with the

need to complete urgent works on time and avoid traffic problems during the day.

Independent legislator Emily Lau said many roadworks caused serious disruptions to traffic and should be conducted at night if residential areas were not affected.

"Often you see these roads dug up but there is no one working," she said. "So why can't the work be carried out at night?"

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