

PRESS RELEASE

5th November 2015

Subject: Coalition Urges Transparent Process To Develop Cruise Pier Alternative With No Dredging and No Reef Destruction

The Save Cayman-Sustainable Cayman Coalition are issuing this Press Release in response to the Cabinet's decision of 28th October, 2015 to move forward with the construction of cruise berthing facility in George Town Harbour.

We thank the Cayman Islands Government for listening to the environmental concerns expressed by so many Caymanians and others who care for our islands.

However, we must note our concern that Government is proceeding with this project despite the results of the public consultation phase indicating 3-1 opposition to the project, the 27,000 plus signatures collected internationally, and almost 5,000 signatories to the local petition. This shows an outpouring of opposition by Caymanians and visitors alike to the negative impacts that have been shown, in the Reports commissioned by the Government, to outweigh the benefits.

While the Coalition agrees that the quality of the experience of our cruise ship passengers should be enhanced (as outlined below), we continue to have serious concerns. These principally relate to the following:

- the implications of this proposal on our Government's finances and the country's debt;
- its impact on our infrastructure and carrying capacity as a small island;
- how the Island will handle issues of overcrowding, both in terms of our tourist attractions and traffic congestion;
- the effect of the potential overcrowding on our stay over tourism market;
- providing secure, quality, long-term employment for Caymanians in a diversified economy
- the long-term negative impacts to our overall sustainable development

We truly believed that shoreside security screening, enhanced tenders and better shoreside facilities for cruise ship passengers would solve the needs of the new ships while avoiding damage to George Town Harbour altogether. We are therefore greatly disappointed by the statements reported by Hon. Moses Kirkconnell that neither Royal Caribbean nor Carnival will now consider tendering their mega ships. We feel this demonstrates a severe disregard on the part of those cruise lines and the FCCA to the environmental concerns of small island nations such as Grand Cayman.

However if that is irrevocably off the table, we would like to see an open and transparent assessment of the potential options, demonstrating that

preserving the reef and water clarity are considered first and foremost in any solution that will result.

If the Government is going to build a cruise pier, the Coalition respectfully requests as follows:

- We advocate a pier option that can be achieved with no dredging and minimal or no destruction of the marine environment of George Town harbour (including our coral reefs and the historic Balboa shipwreck);
- Fairly assess alternatives put forward by developers and the consultants, including, but not limited to detached berthing piers in the deepest water possible, which would require no dredging, minimize thrusters silt and utilize the area that has already been destroyed by cruise ship anchors;
- It is also critical that the mechanism which connects the detached piers in this location to the shore does not cause any environmental damage to the reefs and while there are other possible options, we have seen that this can be achieved by: cable cars, floating docks, or a suspension bridge (with moving walkways if walking distance is a problem).

In summary, if a cruise berthing facility must be constructed, we implore the Government to carefully consider the factors outlined above and to implement a proposal that will eliminate dredging, with little to no destruction of George Town harbour's ancient reefs. It should also ensure that the long-term economic benefits of a project paid for by all, are widely distributed amongst Caymanians and not only for the benefit of a few.

Finally, we urge all Caymanian citizens and registered voters concerned about how the proposed development will impact our land, waters and people to contact Save Cayman or Sustainable Cayman via email (info@savecayman.org) or Facebook. Learn the facts. Become part of the solution. If you have not already signed the referendum petition please do so at <http://www.savecayman.org/> .