

FRIENDS LETTER



Friends of the Environment

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Right Honourable Perry Christie
Office of the Prime Minister
Nassau, N.P., Bahamas

March 27, 2007

Dear Mr. Christie,

Friends of the Environment is an environmental education not-for-profit organization based in Abaco. We are writing to voice our environmental concerns on the proposed Bahamas Electricity Corporation development project planned for Snake Cay, Abaco. We have heard that the area is under consideration for construction of a power plant and a fuel depot. We would like to raise our concern regarding the following areas:

- The area immediately adjacent to, and south of, the Snake Cay dock site is an important mangrove wetland - a sensitive area as it is a nursery for fish, crawfish and other marine life. Nearly 80% of commercial marine life in The Bahamas grows up in mangroves!
- The potential for contamination of marine life and wetland areas greatly increases with the introduction of an industrial operation. Even the smallest spill would be carried into the fragile mangrove ecosystem, causing damage for decades.
- The area between Snake Cay and the Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park (PCLSP) is an important fishing ground for locals, used both for scale fishing and crawfishing.
- As a fuel depot it will require major shipping traffic from the ocean to Snake Cay. Currently the only obvious route is directly through the PCLSP. An increase in large vessel traffic could mean possible groundings and damage to the sea bottom in the shallow Sea of Abaco, wake from ships disturbing visitors to the national park and creating potential safety hazards. The channel connecting this route to the ocean is also frequented by commercial and sports fishing vessels.
- The Pelican Cays Land & Sea Park is a major tourist attraction in Abaco and supports the economy directly through boat rentals, tour operators and dive companies.

To support our concerns, FRIENDS will be writing a report for submission to BEST, BEC and your office for consideration regarding this proposal. We feel it is important that all issues be considered and explored to their fullest extent. FRIENDS would like to extend an invitation to yourself, and any other interested parties to Abaco for a Snake Cay site visit.

Sincerely,


Michael Albury
President


Lindsey McCoy
Executive Director

CC: Dr. Marcus Bethel, Minister of Utilities and Environment
Bradley Roberts, Minister of Works
Dr. Donald Cooper, Undersecretary of BEST Commission
Bernard Nottage, Minister of Health
Revis Rolle, Island Administrator for Abaco
Brent Williamson, Environmental and Safety Manager at BEC