



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 12th, 2014

Kingston, Jamaica

JET SUPPORTS OPPOSITION MOTION ON GOAT ISLANDS PORT

The Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) has learned that opposition Member of Parliament, Gregory Mair, has laid a private member's motion in Parliament yesterday, February 11th, 2014. Mr Mair has requested that the matter of the building of a port or logistics hub in the Portland Bight Protected Area near to the Goat Islands be referred to the Infrastructure and Physical Development committee of Parliament for it "...to take the necessary steps to enquire into the benefits and/or losses that our country could incur if any part of the Portland Bight Protected Area were to become part of the logistics hub." Mr Mair's motion goes on to ask that the Government of Jamaica "...put on hold any final agreement with China Harbour Engineering Company for the development of a logistics hub in Jamaica until this Honourable House receives and deliberates on the report from the Infrastructure and Development Committee".

"We believe that any development in any one of our protected areas should proceed with the utmost caution and careful study," said JET's CEO, Diana McCaulay. "We support Mr Mair's request for debate and a thorough investigation of costs and benefits of any port in the Portland Bight Protected Area before any decision is taken. We repeat our deep concern about the secrecy that continues to shroud this matter."

Below is the text of the Private Member's Motion.

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION

WHEREAS the Government of China, through China Harbour Engineering Company and our Government are currently negotiating the development of elements of a logistics hub in Jamaica, and the Chairman of the Port Authority of Jamaica has recently confirmed that a port will be built in the vicinity of the Goat Islands in the Portland Bight Protected Area as part of the logistics hub;

AND WHEREAS the Portland Bight Protected Area, which includes the Goat Islands, the Hellshire Hills and the adjoining coastline, was created in 1999 under the *Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act* because of its biological diversity and important functions, including

three fish sanctuaries declared under the *Fishing Industry Act*, six game sanctuaries declared under the *Wild Life Protection Act* and two forest reserves declared under the *Forest Act*;

AND WHEREAS there has been no detailed disclosure on the scope of works, the precise location and the consequent environmental impact or economic benefit the operations at the Goat Islands port could have on our country, neither has the Government provided sufficient information to the nation as to the reason why the Goat Islands and its environs would be the best option for a port, and whether or not other sites were considered and rejected;

AND WHEREAS the Environmental Management Scoping Report commissioned by the Government with the intention of guiding its decision-making is believed to contain flaws and inaccuracies and is therefore an unsatisfactory basis on which to make a pronouncement that is in the best and long term interests of Jamaica, with the concomitant risk of irreversible and devastating ecological impacts if a transshipment port, logistics hub, or any form of massive development were to take place on the Goat Islands and its environs:

BE IT RESOLVED that this matter be referred to the Infrastructure and Physical Development Committee of this Honourable House for it to take the necessary steps to enquire into the benefits and/or losses that our country could incur if any part of the Portland Bight Protected Area were to become part of the logistics hub;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government of Jamaica put on hold any final agreement with China Harbour Engineering Company for the development of a logistics hub in Jamaica until this Honourable House receives and deliberates on the report from the Infrastructure and Development Committee.

End