



## **PRESS RELEASE: GOJ CONCEDES CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION WRONGLY ISSUED IN GOAT ISLANDS CASE**

---

**Kingston, Jamaica  
October 24, 2014**

On October 23, 2014 the Supreme Court of Jamaica heard submissions from the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) concerning the issuance of Certificates of Exemption under the Access to Information Act with regard to documents requested for the proposed Goat Islands port facility in the Portland Bight Protected Area.

The Certificates of Exemption had been issued in January and May 2014 by the Minister of Finance and Planning, the Hon. Peter Phillips. JET's legal team, led by Hugh Small, QC, supported by JET environmental staff attorneys Danielle Andrade and Lisa Russell, successfully argued before the Hon. Mrs Justice Sharon George that the Certificates of Exemption were incorrectly issued by the Minister of Finance and Planning.

Carlene Larmond representing the Attorney General and the Ministry of Finance and Planning conceded the Minister had no authority to issue the Certificates. By consent of the parties, the court entered an order of certiorari to quash the decision to issue the Certificates of Exemption dated January 22, 2014 and May 14, 2014 in relation to JET's request for information dated October 1, 2013.

"We are happy to settle this first point concerning the proper jurisdiction for issuing Certificates of Exemption," said Danielle Andrade, JET's Legal Director. "We are anxious for the Court to rule on the other procedural and substantive issues in our case."

On October 24, 2014, the Court ordered that the Minister of Finance and Planning should pay half JET's costs in relation to the claim against him. The case in relation to the Port Authority's refusal to provide information will be heard on June 3rd and 4th, 2015.

The Certificates of Exemption issued by the Minister of Finance and Planning sought to declare the documents requested by JET exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the ATI Act.

--

*Jamaica Environment Trust  
11 Waterloo Road, Kingston 10, Jamaica*