



November 11, 2019

Dear Ms. Shaw,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to the concerns outlined by you and your colleagues regarding Disney Cruise Line's plans in Eleuthera. The letter makes important points about the value of coral reefs and the rich biodiversity of the region, with which we whole-heartedly concur. That is precisely why we are approaching this project with so much care. While I appreciate and share your passion around protecting Lighthouse Point, I'm afraid several of the opinions in the letter are not based on fact, but rather on the wildly speculative and misinformed rhetoric being shared by those who oppose the project.

As we have said from the beginning, we will only move forward with a project at Lighthouse Point if we are able to do so in a way that aligns with our company's deep and long standing commitment to the environment. We have spent an unprecedented two years working hand in hand with a team of highly qualified and experienced scientists and other professionals to complete a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment. When we submit our EIA in the near future, it will be based on extensive field work, robust data collection and analysis, direct engagement with those who have studied the site and the species observed there, and an exhaustive review of available literature.

We remain committed to moving forward with our project in an environmentally responsible manner, and affording protection to this beautiful space and the species that use it. As we have said numerous times before, our plans include developing less than 20 percent of the site and employing sustainable building practices, such as an open-trestle pier to avoid dredging. We have already established environmental monitoring programs that will continue through construction and into operation, and will donate more than 190 acres of privately owned land to the Bahamian people. In addition, we have committed to a multi-faceted program to educate our guests about the role they will play in protecting this special place, something we have been able to effectively do with Disney projects around the world. This commitment is on top of existing environmental initiatives, such as the millions of single use plastics we have eliminated across the Disney Cruise Line fleet, and the millions of dollars in grants the Disney Conservation Fund has awarded for marine conservation and restoration programs around the world, including several in The Bahamas.

It is easy for people, many of whom have never been to South Eleuthera or engaged with the community, to dismiss a project that will create much needed economic opportunities for local residents. This not only includes the quality jobs that will be created during construction and operation, but also the purchase of goods and services and the opportunities for Bahamian ownership that the project will create. This property was for sale for several years and the previous owners had received approval on plans that would have been far more impactful to the site. There is always a delicate balance between sustainable economic development and protecting the environment and we have accomplished that with our plans.

Over the past two years, we have had significant and meaningful engagement with the residents of Eleuthera, and of The Bahamas more broadly. We have also spent time with scientists who have studied the site and engaged with conservation organizations that routinely work in The Bahamas. These conversations have helped us evolve our plans in a way that will best protect the environment and generate economic activity. We welcome the opportunity to engage with any individual or organization that is willing to have a reasonable and productive conversation, including the scientists who signed your letter. However, given the tactics that have been employed by your campaign, we question whether this type of engagement is possible with the organizations leading it.

As I have said before, I appreciate and respect your concern for the environment and am also committed to protecting this special place. We take our commitments and responsibilities seriously and remain confident in our ability to move the project forward in a way that protects and sustains the environment and drives positive results for The Bahamas, and Eleuthera in particular.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mark Penning
Vice President, Animals, Science and Environment
The Walt Disney Company