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LAST CHANCE FOR
LIGHTHOUSE POINT

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Environmentalists Urges Next Bahamian Government and Disney to Reconsider Plans for Lighthouse Point

Disney Family Member Joins Call for Disney to Do Better in the Bahamas

Nassau, Bahamas, September 9, 2021 – The [Stop Disney - Last Chance for Lighthouse Point Campaign](#) released the attached statement today urging the next Bahamian government-- which will be elected on September 16th-- to undertake a formal reevaluation of Disney Cruise Line (DCL) plans for a cruise ship port at Lighthouse Point on Eleuthera. The campaign asks that Disney Cruise Lines be required to supplement its March 2021 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) with additional disclosure of information, analyses, and consultations.

As noted in the Campaign’s statement: “It is now clear that Disney Cruise Line (DCL) wants to ram through environmental approval of its proposed \$400 million cruise ship port at Lighthouse Point in Eleuthera - sadly with the full support of the Bahamian Ministry of the Environment and Housing...Disney’s EIA fails to address adequately critical issues about the project, including the economics and alternatives.”

The statement called attention to the comments (also attached) of **The Bahamas National Trust** on the EIA which were entirely omitted from Disney’s Public Consultation Report. BNT made clear its opposition to the project and stated...*that the best use of this area would be for the land and surrounding marine environment to be established as a protected area. LHP is of world-renowned outstanding beauty worthy of world heritage status and is currently listed as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).*”

Tim Disney, artist and entrepreneur, commenting on the Campaign’s statement, said: “Walt Disney Studios, co-founded by my grandfather, produced some of the first and best nature documentaries. As a child I watched my father work on many of them. I am proud of that legacy and acknowledge the company’s generally good record of environmental responsibility over the years. Thus, it is heartbreaking to witness Disney Cruise Lines' failure to honor this legacy in regard to its proposed cruise ship port at Lighthouse Point in Eleuthera.

The Disney Company's appalling decision to lobby against the proposed reconciliation legislation before the US Congress, which contains provisions essential to seriously address climate change, give the lie to anything Disney may say about its standing as a responsible steward of the environment, in Eleuthera, or anywhere for that matter.

Disney enjoys, and profits from, a special position of trust in the culture. With that comes an opportunity, indeed an obligation, to demonstrate leadership on this most important issue. I join the call on Disney's leaders to reconsider their behavior in The Bahamas, and here in the United States, and to ask themselves if a few percentage points of personal and corporate tax rates are worth sabotaging our best and maybe last chance to seriously address the present calamity of climate change."

Sam Duncombe, Executive Director, reEarth, added: "The cruise ship industry is the most polluting type of tourism in the world. The decision about Lighthouse Point is more important than ever in light of the global impacts of Covid-19, climate change, and environmental injustice. The IPCC's recent report stated loud and clear - we have run out of time to address climate change. We must act now, and we must start at Lighthouse Point."

"Leading international experts have affirmed that this EIA is not sufficient as a basis for claiming that the proposed cruise ship port meets Disney's own standard of 'environmental responsibility.' Disney has decided to rush ahead leaving many questions unanswered," said **Casuarina Mckinney-Lambert, Executive Director, BREEF**. "As an Eleutheran, I am particularly frustrated that the issue of continuing access by Bahamians to the land and sea of Lighthouse Point remains unclear, and that it seems that visitors will no longer have access."

Rashema Ingraham, Executive Director, Waterkeepers Bahamas, added: "Disney claims this will be a good deal for Bahamians, yet continues to refuse to release any economic data. External experts indicate that a sustainable tourism alternative could provide more jobs and economic opportunities. Disney's project must be reevaluated to determine if it is truly the best long-term option for the people of South Eleuthera."

Joseph Darville, Executive Director, Save the Bays, added: "I found Disney's approach to the Lighthouse Point project very disappointing. Disney has shown disdain and disrespect towards our and other important environmental groups. Disney has contributed to an atmosphere of intimidation and fear in South Eleuthera that has made a real public debate over the future of Lighthouse Point impossible."

Marc Yaggi, Executive Director, Waterkeeper Alliance, added: "The future of The Bahamas and the world is at stake here. Lighthouse Point should serve as an example of how governments

and corporations can work together to forge a more sustainable path. The only way to achieve this is by reconsidering Disney's plans.”

Marcie Keever, Friends of the Earth US, added: “In the past, Disney Cruise Lines received high grades when we reviewed its environmental performance among cruise companies. Unfortunately, its actions at Lighthouse Point in the Bahamas are not environmentally responsible and lowered DCL's 2021 ranking. We hope Disney will listen to us and more than 30,000 of our supporters provide a comprehensive review of all the impacts to Lighthouse Point.”

S. Jacob Scherr, Senior Advisor to the Campaign, added: “It was Disney's wildlife documentaries in the 1950s that piqued my interest in the environment that led to my long career as an international environmental attorney and advocate. I have been deeply disappointed by the actions of its cruise line at Lighthouse Point, particularly in regard to climate change and environmental justice. It is not too late for Disney to change course at Lighthouse Point and demonstrate real environmental leadership.”

Background

DCL has put forth a proposal to spend up to \$400 million to construct a half-mile-long pier for its cruise ships and onshore resort for almost a million day-trippers a year at Lighthouse Point, the southernmost tip of the island of Eleuthera. Lighthouse Point is a unique natural site beloved by generations of Bahamians and visitors from around the world. The waters around the point are so biologically rich that they have been formally proposed as a Marine Protected Area.

The controversy over the Lighthouse Point goes back more than decade starting with the last failed marina resort development in 2008 and the start by a Bahamian-led effort with the support of the Nature Conservancy to preserve the point to achieve sustainable economic improvements for the historical impoverished black communities of South Eleuthera. In Fall 2018, the current government decided to allow DCL to purchase Lighthouse Point after a severely truncated review process with one public hearing where those concerned about the project and seeking consideration of alternatives were shouted down and intimidated.

In early 2019, Bahamian and international environmentalists started to cooperate in an effort to persuade Disney to adhere to the same environmental standards to this project that would apply to their projects in the United States and elsewhere. Disney refused repeated requests for meetings to discuss the scope of the EIA and cooperation on alternatives for Lighthouse Point.

Major Bahamian environmental organizations have been joined in the Campaign by the international [Waterkeeper Alliance](#) and Friends of the Earth US. More than 450,000 people have

signed the campaign's [change.org petition](#) to move the cruise port elsewhere and work with local groups on an alternative.

The Ministry of the Environment's public consultation on the EIA in April 2021 attracted more than 300 participants on Zoom. There was insufficient time to engage with DCL's experts and to hear from many voices. As a result, the Campaign organized two extended public consultations to allow for further debate and discussion. DCL declined the invitation to participate; and the Ministry did not respond at all. In July, DCL issued a 551-page Public Consultation Report compiling all comments and DCL's superficial responses. The Report urged the Ministry to approve the EIA as is.