

Elliot Hooper
Tall Ship Trading
Coral Bay Salvage
SV Silver Cloud
#16728 Calabash Boom
St John, VI 00830

August 19, 2014

Mr. Jean Pierre Oriol
Acting Commissioner
Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Coastal Zone Management Program

Dear Mr. Oriol,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Summers End Group proposal for a marina to be built in Coral Bay. I am a land/home owner, permitted and legally moored 100 ft schooner, and business owner for the last 25 years in Coral Bay. I arrived in Coral Bay on my tall ship, Silver Cloud, the day before hurricane Hugo hit St. John. As soon as the storm had passed I started two businesses: Tall Ship Trading Co., and Coral Bay Salvage. We rescued/salvaged ten or more boats in the weeks following Hugo, and over 40 in subsequent years. Almost ALL of these boats were salvaged from the very shoreline on which SEG is proposing to build a marina.

Marilyn was the next large hurricane to hit St. John. I personally witnessed an eight to ten foot storm surge on the west side of the harbor-again, exactly where SEG is proposing to build a marina, and ten foot rollers across the bay, which would be consumed with docks if the marina proposed is built. Marilyn drove my vessel, Silver Cloud, a 100 foot steel schooner, out of the water and onto the shore in front of where Aqua Bistro stands today. Ironically, the Army Corps of Engineers gave me permission to dredge a small swath in order to get the boat floating, CZM denied this request due to endangered seagrass. Respecting CZM's decision, I built an 80 foot rail to slide the boat into deeper water. I can't imagine that this seagrass is no longer endangered. I hope that CZM will stay true to their decision and deny a permit to this project which has a much broader scope and the potential to do far more damage than one boat. No sooner was my boat afloat than Bertha arrived one week later. My vessel was fine, but again the west shore of Coral bay was littered with boats.

Just two weeks ago a small tropical storm, Bertha, passed well to the south of us, bringing maximum 50 knot winds. Even in these minor conditions there were six foot swells throughout the harbor and breaking again with significant force on the western side of the harbor. All of the aforementioned examples offer tangible, irrefutable evidence of why this project is not viable.

The idea that CZM would even consider this proposal is asinine. The fact that any entity could be so presumptuous as to propose taking over an entire harbor is preposterous. Please support the community of Coral Bay, which functions quite nicely as it is, and deny permission to continue with SEG's proposal.

Sincerely,

Elliot Hooper