

Mr. Jean Pierre Oriol
Acting Commissioner
Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources Coastal Zone
Management Program
(Delivered via email)

Summer's End Marina, Coral Bay, St John

I am a Captain on private Yachts for 20 years and have been visiting St John for about as long and part time resident on the island for the last 2 years.

I am concerned that the impact of the proposed size of the docks and initial support structures could be tremendous for the bay. Not only that the docks will displace most of the current boats in the bay, the amount of power, fresh water, sewer, transportation & roads and other infrastructure needed to accommodate as many yachts and necessary services as planned will be a very hard demand on available resources in Coral Bay if not all of St John.

During my travels and marina visits in Florida, the East Coast and the Bahamas as well as the Caribbean, I have seen a lot of marina and resort facilities being built and how their development changed the area. Many times not in favor of the local residents and work force and in some cases the initial marina is just a part of a larger overall package and impact on the island (Bimini: Resort World Bimini & Casino, now with Cruise ship service from Miami). Worst case scenarios would be that a development ran out of funding and leaves a partial build structure or because of environmental conditions the marina is not safe (or considered unsafe for docking by the captains) to accommodate the expected size of boats (Emerald Bay Great Exuma, Ocean World, DR). Most successful marinas become so expensive once in operation that the local boaters or fisherman as well as smaller charter boats cannot afford the dockage and service charges, limiting the users to the high end market and Mega Yachts. As seen in places like Atlantis or Bakers Bay in the Bahamas, as well as other Caribbean islands the resulting commercial development to cater to the demands of this market is very contrary to the laid back character of St John and environmental cautious approach thanks to conservation efforts.

Coral Bay is a convenient US Virgin Island cruising destination that has not been fully included in the charter yacht itineraries but more and more large yachts find their way into the bay each winter season for a night of anchoring and exploring. At this time, it is probably a manageable hazard for the reefs of Coral Bay and mangroves lined shoreline of the National Monument but with vessels lining up for dockage and services, the environmental impact to the natural resources even outside the actual marina can multiply quickly.

A small scale marina that would offer room for local and visiting boats and Yacht tenders, with a Custom house, fuel dock and pump out facility might be a welcome addition to the bay and positive local growth and incentive for development of

services with a good return. The planned extensive marina development project competing for the high end yachting market in the Caribbean to pay for its investments and commercial success will not only change the local community of Coral Bay but possibly give a different face to the island of St John that has been known so far for its National Park and mostly undisturbed environment.

Sincerely

Bernie Altmeier

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