

Mr. Jean Pierre Oriol
Acting Commissioner
Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources Coastal Zone
Management Program
RE: St. John Marina

One question for you! Do you really believe the building of a mega marina and bringing in large numbers of deep draft yachts, in addition to, a 100 or so smaller vessels, a fuel dock and driving 1,333 piles in Coral Harbor will benefit the fragile marine benthos and ecosystem as a whole. If you do actually say you believe this you are scientifically challenged and have no oceanographic knowledge what so ever.

This is what a retired CZM Board Member had to say on this project.....

"What is my opinion? – Since I am no longer on CZM, and won't be reconfirmed, I can have a public opinion. I think this project is by far the worst I have seen proposed for St. John in the time I have lived here, almost 14 years. The three comparable bad projects are Sirenusa and Grande Bay in Cruz Bay (each in Tier 2 of CZM, and thus not subject to Public Hearings and CZM scrutiny), and Pond Bay Club in Chocolate Hole. But this project is significantly worse than any of these other ones. This is much worse for the environment, and would disrupt the way of life in Coral Bay and St. John far more than Pond Bay Club did in the Chocolate Hole area. I voted against Pond Bay Club three separate times, unfortunately being outvoted 2-1 each time. We did save the beach from being "nourished" like the Westin, which the staff and all the Commissioners unanimously agreed on. The project is a horrible scar, but at least we were able to keep everything away from Chocolate Hole harbor."

I was wondering...

The territory of the Virgin Islands threw out the charter boat industry many years ago in the heyday of that industry; money then, was cheap and yacht sales positive... They didn't value the boaters then, and forced the entire boating community to move to the BVI's.

Now that Money's tight and yacht sales probably depressed why does one think a Marina is a good investment for St. John; why invite the charterboat industry back when the Caribbean is now already inundated with other similar Marinas. Does anyone know the state of financial health of Yacht Haven's Marinas, French Town's Marina's or even American Yacht Harbour in RedHook....Has having Marina's in St. Thomas or St Croix helped find Jobs for the kids of those islands. Has that revenue helped their infrastructure or brought in tax money for the government.

Having a Marina in Redhook did not stop the grocery store from closing right across the street from that complex.

We need to put money into reducing high energy costs. There may be Rich people and money available to build these monstrosities but I doubt there will be real people able to afford the high rents and high Wapa Bills after it is all built. VIDPNR identified Coral bay, among other locations, as being an Area of Particular Concern....an area to protect and conserve for their unique habitat and animal species "of particular interest or that are threatened or endangered and/or provide a scientific or educational value".

What changed?

Remember "off season" ..."Sales" where will the traffic come from?....and speaking of traffic...already the noise pollution on centerline roads is problematic with buses, trucks and air braking.... Its still a one way road in some areas....

Does anyone want another St. Thomas?

Please Stop the "Not well planned or thought out" St. John Marina.

Below are comments from a trade article:

Since most of these disasters occur without warning and because marina owners in some states, like Florida, are restricted from requiring boats to leave the marina when a hurricane is imminent, your marina will more than likely have boats in it when natural disaster strikes. Just as additional strain is put on your marina during these times, the boats in your marina are subject to these same forces, placing additional load on your structures.

Remember, you are in the service business, and if your marina is closed pending an insurance settlement or awaiting repair, you are not doing anybody any good. I would like to pass along a situation that happened on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1995 when Hurricane Marilyn passed directly over the island, causing severe damage to everything in its path, including the three principal marinas on the island. Only one marina, Crown Bay Marina, was prepared structurally and was staff-trained to open the day after the hurricane. Because of its auxiliary power, backup potable water supply and fuel reserves, it was able to help the entire community recover. For several days, it was the only place on the island selling fuel, which was necessary to keep the cleanup equipment operating since the public utilities were all out of service and most businesses on the island were closed. To this day, the other two marinas have not been rebuilt and are sitting in disrepair primarily because their insurance carriers were overextended and unable to pay on their claims. Both marinas eventually went into foreclosure and are now owned by

the banks that held their mortgages. This why you shouldn't rely on your insurance carrier to bail you out.

Today most lenders require mortgages to put up a capital replacement reserve equal to about 2 percent of total revenues. If you have such an arrangement with your lender and you believe this is your fall-back position, you should read your agreement again. Most often, the capital replacement reserve is used to assure the lender that, if the property has to be taken back in the event of a foreclosure, there are funds to cover any deferred maintenance on the property. About the only way, that reserve would be used in the event of a natural disaster is if you walked away from the property and turned it over to the lender.

Although there is no way to predict the extent of damage or the cost of repair, there are a few things you can do to minimize the financial impact on your operation. First, continually invest in maintaining the first-class condition of your facility. The stronger the facility, the more punishment it can withstand without incurring major damage. Second, train your staff on what to do in the event of a natural disaster. Don't just talk about an emergency procedure or write it down and put it on a shelf to collect dust; roles play with your staff, and test your emergency equipment regularly. Third, look at your license agreements to see what rights you have and your customers have. If you are not on firm legal ground, one of your customers may end up owning your marina.

Remember, the key to minimizing your financial impact is to open for business as soon as possible after the disaster strikes. Time is money, and if you are tied up in insurance settlement negotiations or lawsuits, no matter what the final outcome, you will be the loser. In these situations, you must take control and not rely on someone else to make things right.

Mark Buchalter
St. John