

August 20, 2014

Mr. Jean Pierre Oriol, Acting Commissioner
Virgin Island Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Coastal Zone Management Program
HAND DELIVERED AT CZM HEARING, AUGUST 20, 2014

RE: Land and Water CZM Application Submitted by The Summer's End Group

Dear Mr. Oriol and CZM Committee members:

My name is Karen Mackey. I live and work seasonally, so I am not a full time resident anywhere. I am not a landowner, a business owner, or a boatie, although I learned to sail in Coral Bay. What I am is a LOVER of Coral Bay.

For the last 7 winters I have had the privilege of living and working on St. John. I first came here in February 2008 to live and work with a friend in Fish Bay, caring for Kiko Petzel. I had been living in a small cabin in Vermont (where I worked seasonally on the Long Trail, taking care of a mountain summit) without electricity or running water or much firewood. The sun and warmth, the blues of the water and skies, the green hills and pink bougainvillea, and the smells of blooming jasmine and frangipani blew me away after being in the cold, dark, and gray for so long. Discovering the underwater world through snorkeling revitalized my sense of wonder and encouraged a whole new love for the ocean and its plants and animals. Kiko's house looked out at Ditliff Point, which was mostly undeveloped and open to the public. I loved exploring the point and the untouched view of it from the house. My second winter we heard construction noise from the point most everyday and now things are so very different there. Kiko passed at the end of my second winter, so my third winter I moved to Coral Bay where I take care of local children and clean modest vacation villas. When I got to Coral Bay, I realized I was in the tropical version of Vermont: laid back, slow pace of life, incredible influence of and connection to nature, minimal amount of development, and caring, conscious community. Coral Bay is a place where people focus less on worldly possessions and more on being on island time, enjoying the moment, serenity, calm and natural beauty.

I am opposed to the Summer's End Marina for so many reasons.

Coral Bay could benefit from a very small marina, but not this one. Its location is highly exposed and vulnerable to the weather, especially tropical storms and hurricanes. It also would block where the local fishermen currently sell their fish and block a public view of historic Fortsberg. Its size is enormous and out of scale with the harbor and the spirit of Coral Bay. There are other marinas like Yacht Haven Grande that are in much more appropriate locations for providing services that are underutilized.

This type of project would destroy the local economy. There are over 200 vacation villas in Coral Bay, which would be severely affected. Villas slowly changed St. John, but they have also added a lot to its economy. No one is going to want to stay in Coral Bay during the years and years of construction. Construction always takes longer than expected

under the best of infrastructure and time schedules. It is no secret that Coral Bay's infrastructure (roads, water, electric and waste disposal) are already challenged. And the people who were attracted to Coral Bay are not going to want to stay there once the construction is over because of the noise and light pollution, the changed views looking out at the harbor, and the concrete, development and fast pace that such a project would bring. The lack of visitors will in turn affect the businesses and craftspeople that are already there.

Ecologically, the destruction that would be caused is heart wrenching. Drilling 1333 steel pilings into the harbor bottom will change it forever. The harbor does not flush well and the pollution from the boats (diesel and paint and chemicals used to clean them) and the rust from the pilings would accumulate in the harbor and hurt the plants and animals. The propellers from the boats will create silt since the harbor is relatively shallow – this will additionally hurt the plants and animals and change the color of the water. A minimum of 3 acres of sea grass, which require lots of sunlight to be healthy, will be blocked by the marina and docked boats. Sea grass is the feeding ground for endangered marine turtles. According to the application, a tiny amount of grasses (compared to those that will be effected) are to be transplanted and who knows if they will survive. What will this do to the already endangered turtles?

The noise from the construction of the marina and proposed buildings - trucking the materials, the actual digging of the pilings, and the noise once the marina is in place from the generators on the boats is another form of pollution. Peace and tranquility will be a thing of the past. But more than the noise that will bother the humans, there is the noise underwater that will affect all the creatures that live there – the fish, turtles, conch, and rays.

The light pollution from the boardwalk, buildings, and boats will affect humans on land and the creatures in the water. Being able to see the milky way on a clear night will be a thing of the past.

Local boaters will not be able to afford access to the water. The families that have lived here for generations will be even further marginalized with the introduction of such a foreign culture. Taxes will likely increase. The Coral Bay that so many of us know and love will become a thing of the past.

Please do not approve this marina. Please do not put Coral Bay on the endangered species list. For the love of Coral Bay,

Karen Mackey