

Impacts of the Resorts World Bimini Cruise Ship Terminal

For immediate release.

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Full Text of Presentation by Gail Woon, Founder of EARTHCARE to Information Session at Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina, Alicetown, Bimini on March 15th, 2014.

Good evening,

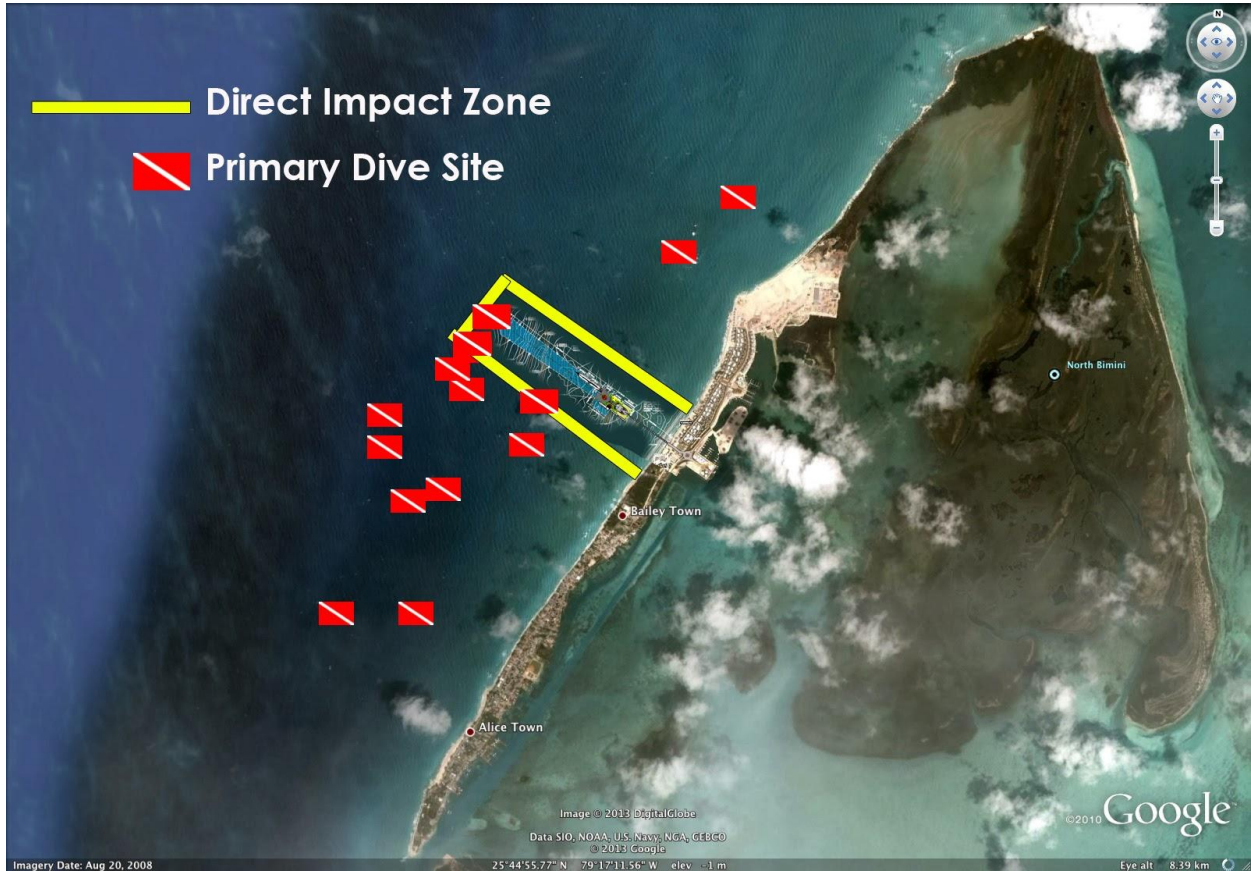
The cruise ship terminal for Resorts World Bimini has been described as “necessary” to the business plan. I will outline here several reasons why that is a ludicrous statement.

First, let me outline what the cruise ship terminal plan entails:

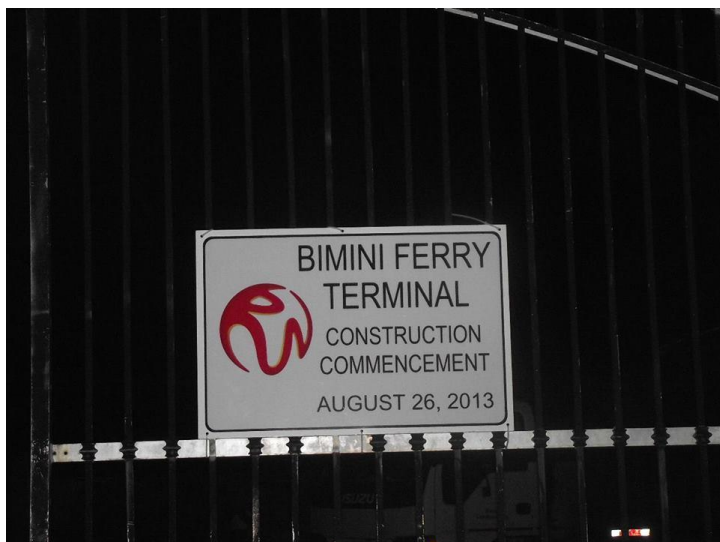


The plan is to build a 1,000 foot pier terminal that will be wide enough for two vehicles to pass each other comfortably. At the end of this 1000 foot long structure will be the manmade “island”. The island will be made from 220,000 cubic yards of your Crown Land prime ocean bottom that just happens to be right next to 14 of your “prime dive sites”. The reason for the

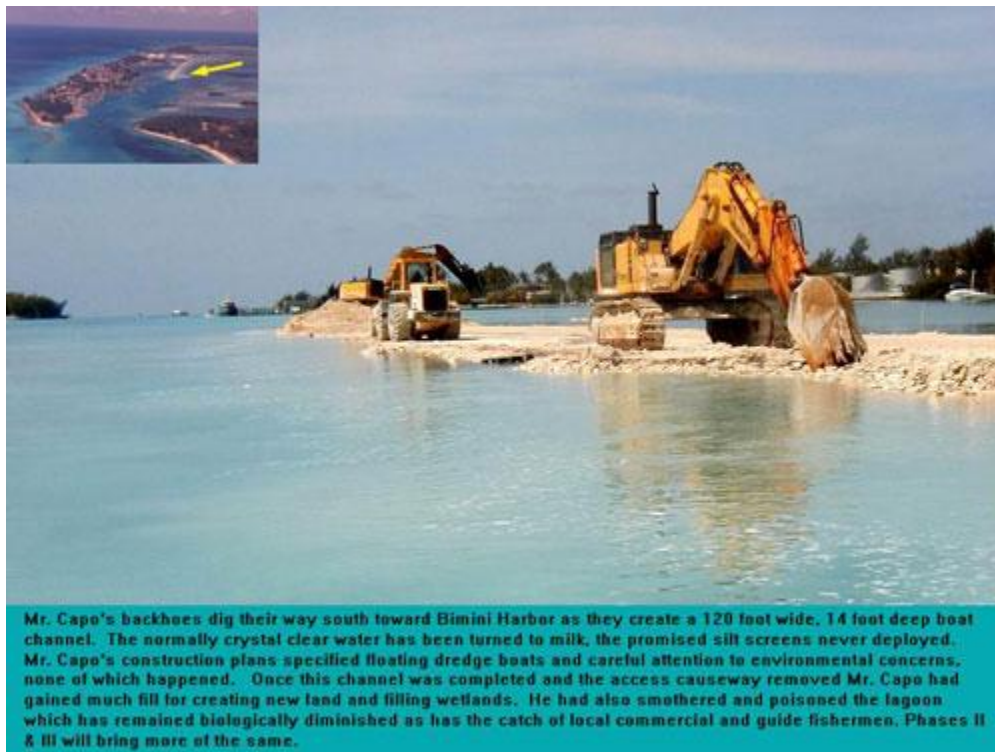
idea is to let their too large for the island, cruise ship to be able to come right up to the so-called island, which will house the Customs and Immigration and a “beach club” house.



The MAIN reason this delicate site was chosen, and the only reason that this incredibly valuable biologically diverse site was chosen for destruction is simply because it is closest to the casino and to the main road of Resorts World Bimini.



Let us look at the history of the former Bimini Bay Resort which is still very much influenced by the original developer, Gerardo Capo, the poster child for unsustainable habitat destruction through ill thought out small island megadevelopment. I use Mr. Capo as an example when I teach young students about what should not be allowed to happen in sensitive wetland areas that are the breadbasket of our all important fisheries resource and our big draw for tourism, our natural Bahamian environment.



Since the start of the Bimini Bay Resort in the 90s, it has gone through much scrutiny and controversy. However, in spite of the controversy, Mr. Capo has been allowed to destroy over 160+ acres of healthy mangrove wetlands area. Now, you might say, oh that is useless swamp. Guess what, that useless swamp is where a huge part of your fisheries resource replenishes. And I have been in touch with Bimini fishermen, not the tourists who come to fish, I mean the fishermen and fisherwomen of Bimini, who fish here to make money to feed their families. They are feeling this loss of the mangroves. Since the destruction of the mangrove forests, they have to go further and further out and fish longer hours to get a day's catch.





There is more that I could say about that but since time is of the essence let me stick to the topic at hand. In addition to the mangrove annihilation, Mr. Capo was allowed to and is still dredging cheap (free) fill from again, your Crown land, the ocean bottom in the North Sound. Why was he allowed to do this? Ask our previous and present Governments. It is incredibly stupid, in my humble opinion.



The North Sound was a very important habitat for the nursery for the fisheries of Bimini. Now it is scarred, and I fear, will never be able to come back to the productivity it once had; it is now a deep marina for megayachts.

The 220,000 cubic yards of ocean bottom that will be removed from the endangered reef habitat is simply, so that they do not have to truck fill over from the North Sound side to create the manmade island adjacent to the 1000 foot terminal. I will go over the sedimentation that this dredging will cause a little later.

The Bimini Blue Coalition has gone on record in the newspapers and on the internet with their "Better Plan for Bimini" which simply suggests that smaller passenger vessels be used, say, 300-500 passenger capacity vessels, that can dock at the existing Government dock. The Balaeria used to dock there with no problem.



This plan would negate the need for destroying the area of the proposed terminal and stop the inevitable side damage that will be caused to the 14 Prime Dive Sites adjacent to the terminal. Did I mention that those 14 dive sites will likely be suffocated in the fine silt that will be generated by the dredging exercise that is slated to begin, I heard, within the next 3 weeks?

This alternative plan would also include the local transportation professionals in that they would be able to get a piece of the pie in being able to transport passengers to RWB. Further the passengers would have the opportunity to see Alice Town, before they get to RWB and can decide if they want to leave RWB to see what the rest of Bimini has to offer such as museums, the straw market, and the various restaurants that are not on the RWB property.

220,000 cubic yards is equivalent to 5 football fields that are twenty feet deep. That is how much of your Crown land that will be ripped from God's ocean bottom, to build an artificial island to tie up some megayachts and the Cruise ship.



Every time the cruise ship docks huge amounts of coral killing silt will be stirred up to inevitably land on the surviving corals. This silt will suffocate those corals.

Let me remind you of the importance of corals. A coral reef habitat produces more food than an exactly the same sized agricultural system, a farm.



DO NOT BE FOOLED BY THE PUBLIC RELATIONS NONSENSE BEING GENERATED BY RWB. The only corals being moved are the small ones that can be picked up by one person. Transplanting corals is a very delicate operation that should only be done by marine biology professionals. The person in charge of the terminal construction and purporting himself to be a specialist in corals is a marine engineer with no biological background. This is the person who is deciding the fate of our Bahamian endangered corals. 80% of the Caribbean's corals have disappeared due to many causes such as habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change. Do you really want to sacrifice the few healthy corals the Bahamas has left so that a cruise ship can land closer to a casino?? Also the large corals that cannot be picked up by a person will be destroyed, Marked for Death.



Also there are 2 alternate sites that would have been far less damaging to the coral habitat where the cruise ship terminal could have been built without desecrating our 14 important scuba diving coral reefs. One is North and one is South. Neither were considered.



I am going to end this with a slide I took in 2004, when the North Sound was being raped by the Bimini Bay developer, to create cheap fill in order to make more acreage, more real estate to sell at a profit to the company, at the expense of you the Bahamian Crown land owners.

I took this aerial shot of the dredging. The developer claimed that they had, in fact, put in silt curtains to minimize the siltation created by the dredging process. Upon closer inspection it was determined that this was an out and out lie. The yellow line here is an oil boom. They look good from the surface. The only problem is that an oil boom is designed to contain oil that floats on the surface of the water. The oil booms do NOTHING to stop siltation and sedimentation that is created by the dredging process.

This is what your reef area will look like in a very few weeks. If I were you, I would be more than upset over this, I would be LIVID. I will sit down now as there are further presentations.

Thank you for your attention.