



Legislature of the Virgin Islands

PRESS RELEASE

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SENATORS RATIFY PERMIT TO DREDGE STT HARBOR

After conducting two hearings and taking testimony both in support and in opposition, the Committee on Planning and Environmental Protection voted 4-3 on Monday (6-22-09) to ratify Major Coastal Zone Permit CZT-04-09 (W) for the West Indian Company, LTD and the VI Port Authority to dredge the Charlotte Amalie Harbor and dispose of the spoils at Lindberg Bay.

The Committee heard from WICO President & CEO Edward Thomas, CH2MHILL project consultants Charles Hendrick and Stephen Swingle and Royal Caribbean International representative Craig Milan, who assured senators and the public that they were sensitive to the opponents' concerns by removing some areas of the proposed dredging where tests demonstrated the highest levels of heavy metals.

CZM Division Director Janice D. Hodge agreed stating that measures were in place to lessen or eliminate the adverse impacts of the project, and there will be adequate supervision to ensure compliance with territorial air and water quality standards.

However, many from the general public testified in opposition to the dredging on environmental concerns. Sean LaPlace, Helen Gjessing, Roan Creque, Elizerbeth Kadison, Clarence Payne and Attorney Jeffrey Weiss testified that depositing the dredged material in Lindberg Bay will negatively affect beach goers and the nearby water park. Mr. Creque recommended dumping the spoils at a 900-foot drop off in the waters between St. Thomas and St. Croix.

Best Western Carib Beach and Emerald Beach Resorts' managing director Joel Kling also testified in opposition to the project saying that placing the spoils at Lindberg Bay may cause resort cancellations by visitors who want to experience the tranquility of the island.

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St. Croix Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Michael Dembeck testified in support of the Charlotte Amalie Dredging Project because it was “critically important” to the economy of the entire Territory. Mr. Dembeck said that the project would accommodate the newest generation of cruise ships which will generate approximately \$30 million in additional revenues for the Territory in the first year after the project is completed.

After brief deliberations, senators ratified the permit with Senators Carlton Dowe, Patrick Simeon Spravue, Alvin Williams Jr. and Michael Thurland voting in favor, and Senators Shawn-Michael Malone, Sammuell Sanes and Adlah Donastorg Jr. voting in opposition.

Non-committee member Wayne A.G. James was also present at Monday’s Planning & Environmental Protection Committee meeting.

END