

*"Protect the
Ocean and You
Protect Yourself."*



December 7, 2019

I feel there is need to clarify my statement about the expansion of the port and cruise ship facilities on Grand Cayman that appeared in the December 5 edition of the Cayman Compass. The intent of my statement has been misconstrued by people on both sides of this issue and perhaps even misused by some. I am particularly distressed to hear that people with whom I have worked for many years in the Cayman Islands and throughout the Caribbean may have perceived that I would stand for anything that is not in best interests of preserving the fragile environment and especially corals in the region. I am very appreciative of all the responses and detailed explanations I have received, as well as for every comment I have reviewed online. Thank you all for your informative and insightful facts and opinions and for your passionate feelings.

I was shown and have reviewed the latest plans put forth by Verdant Partners, the development partnership that includes Carnival Cruise Corporation with which I have served as an environmental advisor throughout 2019. And, I do think the plan improves upon what was proposed initially going back to 2015. However, that is by no means the full story and nor should conclusions about the project be based solely upon this latest proposal. All of the best science that is available must be considered and identifying how the cruise ship industry can best serve the people of the Cayman Islands must be central to any final decisions about this project.

I believe that opposing parties, who have different perspectives on critical issues, often benefit from face to face discussions. So, I reiterate what I said on December 5, I recommend that all parties "get an understanding of the latest plans and collectively determine what is best for the Cayman Islands." In more specific terms I suggest a face to face meeting that would involve the Cayman Islands Government, the Department of the Environment, the National Trust, Dr. Vaughan and Polaris, Verdant Isle Port Partners, Central Caribbean Marine Institute, Cruise Port Referendum Cayman, and Protect Our Future. This forum should be open to the public. With both sides discussing and the public viewing the process, I trust the upcoming vote on the development will resolve this important issue and result in the protection of the coral reefs and the community that lives and thrives on Cayman.

Determining the future of the Port is up to the people of the Cayman Islands and it is the responsibility of the Cayman government to enable the process to proceed in a way that protects the future of the Cayman Islands. I look forward to assisting in any ways that are helpful.

For me, it is a moral issue and I cannot passively observe the destruction of our water planet and its beautiful natural resources, our global heritage. I assure you that my lifelong dedication and devotion to working tirelessly for the protection of the ocean, both at the grassroots level and at the highest echelons of government and industry, will continue, helping to energize alliances for positive change to protect and improve the quality of life for future generations.

Jean-Michel Cousteau

