

Office of the Leader of the Opposition

For Immediate Release

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Leader of the Opposition urges Premier to halt port project

The Leader of the Opposition has today written to the Premier to urge him to immediately halt undertaking any further contractual obligations in relation to the Cruise Berthing Facility Project and to highlight a growing pattern of autocratic governance.

Mr McLean, Leader of the Opposition said, "I have added the voice of the Opposition to calls for the Government to immediately halt undertaking any further contractual obligations in relation to the Cruise Berthing Facility Project. It is the only responsible course of action to take and Wednesday's announcement that "a historic milestone has been reached in the procurement process" adds urgency to the case.

Our Constitution which was approved by most voters allows for a People Initiated Referendum to be triggered by a 25% threshold. This threshold was set to discourage frivolous referendums and both the Premier and I wholeheartedly supported and campaigned for that provision in 2009.

It is therefore deeply disappointing that instead of welcoming the participatory involvement of the electorate, the Government is further entrenching its position to press on. For the Government to so wilfully disregard the hard-work and dedication of our fellow Caymanians, is a sucker-punch to the most basic principles of democracy and the spirit of good governance.

The Government's continued actions also potentially exposes the public purse to financial penalties. We have already been down that road with the GLF fiasco and don't need a repeat. The Caymanian people have already paid the price and seen first-hand what happens when decisions are rushed without the proper governance structure in place.

Plans by the Government to stack the Public Accounts Committee with 4 government members and only 1 opposition member means that no objective scrutiny will be allowed during a period of some of our largest capital projects to date. Couple with the failure to bring into effect the Procurement Law and the Standards in Public Life, a worrying pattern is emerging.

As agents of democracy, we must sometimes stop and take a pause, (inconvenient as this may be for the Government), until the will and wishes of our electorate can be made constitutionally clear. Our people rightly expect their Government to govern with integrity, transparency and accountability. Anything less, is a disservice to our residents and the democratic principles we are meant to uphold."

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