

SAVE GUANA CAY REEF ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE

“Public Consultation”

Empty PLP political rhetoric

May 31, 2005

The Save Guana Cay Reef Association condemns the Government for its empty, vacuous and fraudulent political rhetoric about public consultation.

Although the Government constantly talks about public consultation, it has failed, despite repeated requests by the people of Guana Cay to consult them on the Baker's Bay Project.

In the Bahama Journal of May 30, 2005 on the LNG issue, the Prime Minister, in withholding a decision on the LNG approval stated

“I have received petitions with Bahamian signatures and I thought, most certainly out of respect for the views of those Bahamians who have expressed themselves in that form, I ought to give them an opportunity to be heard”.

In the same publication, Allyson Maynard-Gibson in relation to the Guana Cay matter stated that

“...we fully consult citizens. That is the hallmark of the Christie administration and that will not change. The Prime Minister has been very clear about that.”

The Supreme Court recently held that there was no obligation on the part of the Government to consult. Clearly the Association disagrees with this judgment and will be appealing it.

In the meantime, however, this seems to give the Government license to ride roughshod over the rights of its citizenry. The people of Guana Cay have hundreds and hundreds of signed petitions, and have evidence that there was no public consultation prior to signing the Heads of Agreement. So despite these promises from the Prime Minister and his Government, “**public consultation**” is meaningless. It is nothing more than political rhetoric and fraudulent demagoguery designed to stifle public comment and trick the public.

Why has the Government refused to consult the people of Guana Cay? Why are the petitions ignored? Why did they enter into the Heads of Agreement without prior consultation? Why has the Prime Minister not had the decency and respect to give the people of Guana Cay “**an opportunity to be heard**”?

The voices of the people of Guana Cay will be heard. We will not be stifled.

The people of Guana Cay challenge the Prime Minister and Allyson Maynard-Gibson to publicly state the details of where and when they consulted with the people of Guana Cay before signing the Heads of Agreement.

Frederick Smith