

Chatham/Cap-de-Ville Industrial Estate. Letter of Objection. Feb 2006

Dr. D. McIntosh,
CEO,
Environmental Management Authority,
8 Elizabeth Street,
St. Clair,
Port of Spain

2nd February 2006

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ref: CEC Application CEC0851/2004 Industrial Estate at Chatham/Cap-de-Ville.

Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club (TTFNC) have attended consultations held at Chatham Youth Camp and IMA Chaguaramas, put on by the IMA as consultants to NEC who are the developers of the proposed industrial estate at Chatham/Cap-de-Ville.

We wish to register an initial comment at this point, which concerns the area chosen for this project, which we understand to be the first step towards the industrialisation of this rural area. TTFNC may have other comments, which will be conveyed to you later.

We understand that the entire south-western peninsula is designated in the 1968 National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) as being agricultural-use with small-scale opportunities for tourism. This designation resulted from the nation-wide studies that went into the preparation of the NPDP, and although we understand that the NPDP is to be revised, we are not aware of any changes to the natural, social or, agricultural environment that would merit a change of designation in this area. It is our understanding that any approval of developments in this area must conform to the NPDP unless a formal 'change of use' is approved by the appropriate authority.

As an example of the justification for retaining the existing agricultural-use designation we draw your attention to the fact raised in the consultations that the location is within the Erin geological syncline, in fact, near to the axis of this structure. We have been made aware also that expanded industrial estate developments are planned, and that these will actually straddle the syncline. The Erin Sand aquifer currently provides a source of potable water, which is exploited by WASA, and is piped to consumers in the area, and to Point Fortin. Advice from WASA is that this aquifer is not yet fully developed, and remains an important supply in an area which suffers relatively low rainfall and chronic water shortage. It should be noted that the importance of this water supply has been largely realised in the period following the 1968 NPDP. It is clear that any built developments such as are proposed will involve the placement of unnatural barriers in the form of paved and roofed areas, and sealed drainage, to the normal intake to the aquifer, and that the potential for toxic pollutants in such rainfall run off that does enter the aquifer, will increase.

We therefore must advise that it is our view that the current agricultural-use designation appears to have been well founded, and that in addition to our concerns about progressive loss of natural habitats in the country, this area is unsuitable for industrial development.

Yours faithfully,

I.R. Potter
President, TTFNC

cc:

The Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis,
Minister of Planning and Development,
Eric Williams Finance Building,
Independence Square,
Port of Spain.

Mr. Prakash Saith,
National Energy Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago,
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