

Chaguaramas Housing. Letter of Objection. Sent Mar 2006

3rd March 2006

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

Dear Ms. Robinson-Regis,

Ref: Housing and Hotel Developments in Chaguaramas.

Our organisation has noted the press announcements of housing to be sited in the Chaguaramas area. We have also seen articles describing hotels to be built in the area.

During August 2005 the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club submitted proposed **Environmental Principles** to be used in the revision of the National Physical Development Plan.

Within the document we identified **Objectives** which included:

- Permanent protection of natural environment to designated areas.
- Provision of natural areas for recreational use.
- Protection of areas of natural beauty.

Also under **Current Problems** we included:

- Extensive contamination of marine and terrestrial waters.
- Extinction of some species and general wild life population under threat.
- Progressive loss of forested areas with inadequate provision of replacement timber production capacity.
- Loss of traditional access to sea and views from uncontrolled coastal development.
- Haphazard industrial development in any areas appearing to have lower-cost space
- Haphazard housing development in any areas appearing to have lower-cost space.
- Statutory consultations with interested parties, prior to project implementation, are token, held after initial acceptance in principle of the project and location, generally held in the immediate area of the project and thus remote to many qualified interest groups, are frequently advised effectively too late to achieve effective participation.

Among our **Recommendations** we identified:- control of excessive population as number 1, zoning of all land and marine areas as number 4, and number 19 as:

- The northwestern, northeastern, southwestern, southeastern peninsulas of Trinidad to be protected from further extensive industrial, commercial, and housing development.

It is with great concern therefore that we note the proposed developments in Chaguaramas effectively contradict the principles that we so strongly believe to be in the best interests of our country.

It is our understanding that on the release to Trinidad and Tobago from occupation by the USA military, it was resolved that Chaguaramas be dedicated to the enjoyment of the people. Being relatively unbuilt this entire area remains under largely natural or agricultural cover, and is therefore a priceless example of natural beauty within easy reach of the largest centres of population. We advocate that such a valuable natural asset is of ever-increasing value to the mental and physical health of the nation, as our land becomes more crowded and industrialised. Indeed criticism can be levelled that the unfortunate permitting of large-scale partying establishments already poses a threat to the serenity of the area. Party functions are best held in areas more accessible to sudden high traffic movements and can be sited elsewhere since this is not an activity conducive to appreciation of natural beauty. Also the marine service facilities along the southern coast of the peninsula are allowed to operate with no control of toxic effluents discharged to the sea. This serious pollution has been measured and documented by the IMA but continues unabated even though it could easily be mitigated by relatively simple drainage control methods. We believe that attention should be given to remedying these ills rather than creating additional problems by human occupation.

The Chaguaramas area is not one of large-scale employment, and should remain thus, since the creating of additional employment opportunities will only increase the incidence of pollution and aggravate the traffic problem – which is currently entirely due to inappropriate development, and few localised (and easily remedied) road bottlenecks, plus driver indiscipline. We therefore believe a resident population should not be created, and the true value of this natural national asset be preserved as such.

Yours truly,

I.R. Potter
President, TTFNC.

cc The Hon Penelope Beckles.
Minister of Public Utilities and The Environment.

Dr. D. McIntosh,
CEO,
Environmental Management Authority (Ref. CEC 1097/2005).

The CEO,
Chaguaramas Development Authority,

The Hon. Keith Rowley,
Minister of Housing