

SAVE THE BAYS Gazette

FALL/WINTER 2021



COALITION TO PROTECT CLIFTON BAY

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THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

TO BE...

OR NOT TO BE?



Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas jostles the nation's attention to Climate Warming, Rising Sea Levels, risk of Oil Drilling

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DISASTERS TESTED THE METTLE OF SAVE THE BAYS (STB) & WATERKEEPERS BAHAMAS (WKB)

Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas earned their stripes in the grueling, wrenching disasters of mid-2019 and into 2020.

If there was anyone out there of the opinion that all STB and WKB did was issue press statements, file court actions and press for transparency in environmental matters, they can now add humanitarian work and diplomacy to the attributes of these organizations.

The executive, staff and volunteers attached to STB and WKB earned their place in history with their stellar and selfless conduct and the humanitarian outreach exhibited, demonstrated and realized during the most heart wrenching and destabilizing of natural disasters in over a century and a half.

Dorian severely punished Grand Bahama and Abaco. Effects still linger today. Loss of life, property, water damage, severe infrastructural melt downs. All followed by the disastrous oil spill at the Equinor Oil Refinery, formerly known as South West Riding Point Oil refinery in East Grand Bahama.

1. People homeless.
2. Water tables compromised.
3. Decaying bodies in the open.
4. Tornado.
5. Sea Swells.
6. Food Shortages.
7. Power Outages.
8. Animals in distress.
9. Huge swathes of land and sea smothered in oil and slick.
10. Hospital and Clinics at capacity.
11. Airport shut down.
12. Sea Ports shut down.
13. Scarcity of potable and safe drinking water.
14. Downed trees and power lines and lamp poles.
15. Business houses flooded and ruined.
16. Public and Private records destroyed by water damage.
17. People missing.
18. Looting.
19. Mental depression and fatigue.
20. Patients on prescribed medicines unable to access pharmacies.
21. Shoddy storm shelters
22. Shut down of communications i.e. telephone, internet.

These are some of the staggering difficulties Grand Bahama and Abaco faced in this period. Leadership, now more than ever was necessary to bring calm and management to these situations.

Understanding its role, STB and WKB sprang into action on all fronts. This mid-2019 thru 2020 Gazette reports on the work and effort. STB & WKB recommits itself to the service of the Bahamian people.



Save the Bays Chairman and Waterkeepers, Joseph Darville with Executive Director of Waterkeepers Bahamas, Rashema Ingraham along with team members from 4Ocean and First Onsite Restoration as they generously donated reusable trash cleanup bags and trash pickers, which were used during a Radio Beach, Bimini, cleanup in 2021. The supplies were later donated to the staff and students of the Louise McDonald High School.

The Environment Speaks
Hosted by: **Joseph Darville**
Co Host: Javan Hunt
EVERY FRIDAY @ 4PM



Waterkeeper® Bahamas, a close partner of Save The Bays, is one of over 300 members and affiliates of the Waterkeeper® Alliance, a global network focused on promoting waters that are swimmable, fishable and drinkable. Around the world, Waterkeepers are on the frontlines of the global water crisis, patrolling and protecting more than 2.5 million square miles of rivers, lakes and coastal waterways on six continents.

TOGETHER WE STAND

Save The Bays partners with existing Bahamian conservation, environmental and educational organizations on jointly agreed-upon initiatives.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abaco Cares • Andros Conservancy and Trust
Bahamas National Trust • Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation • Bimini Blue Coalition
Clifton Heritage National Park • EARTHCARE
Young Marine Explorers • Friends of the Environment
The Island School • Lyford Cay POA
Responsible Development for Abaco • Save Guana Cay Reef
Swim for Ocean Survival • The Nature Conservancy
Grand Bahama Human Rights Association • reEarth
Citizens for A Better Bahamas • Waterkeepers Bahamas
West End Eco Fishing Camp Association

Team work makes the dream work, save our environment.

Launched in 2013, Save The Bays has more than 500 members and over 20,000 Likes on Facebook. The environmental protection aspect of its legal work is unprecedented in The Bahamas and its education and advocacy arms engage in activities including beach clean-ups, water monitoring, preservation of marine resources, training of Youth Environmental Ambassadors, Camp Eco-Explorer, talks on climate change and supporting efforts to teach every young person in The Bahamas how to swim. Save The Bays supporters say they will not rest until a comprehensive Environmental Protection Act is law.





Save the Bays Chairman and Waterkeeper, Joseph Darville

Save the Bays legal director and Waterkeeper, Frederick Smith, QC

‘SAVE THE BAYS’ SAYS DON’T ROLL THE DICE

OIL DRILLING IN OUR WATERS IS A GAMBLE THE BAHAMAS CANNOT RISK

Save the Bays, a leading advocacy group is opposed to oil exploration in Bahamian waters “unless and until” a US-style Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is created, warning that this nation is “lost at sea” on the issue.

Fred Smith QC, legal director for Save the Bays offered the following points:-

1. The Bahamas needs to establish an “independent, well-funded and effective” environmental regulator before deciding whether to approve oil exploration.
2. Parliament should pass an Environmental Protection Act and strengthen the existing agency, the Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST) which is just a “Mickey Mouse” and “a toothless tiger”.
3. In the absence of legislative reform and an effective regulator the circumstances are likened to a situation of “the blind leading the blind”.
4. How can the Government approve oil exploration/drilling in Bahamian waters when it had yet to tackle the decades-old oil spills at Clifton Pier, and numerous other pollution incidents throughout the archipelago?
5. “Save the Bays is against oil exploration unless and until an Environmental Protection Act is passed, with an Environmental Protection Agency that is not a toothless tiger”.
6. How could the Government be consid-

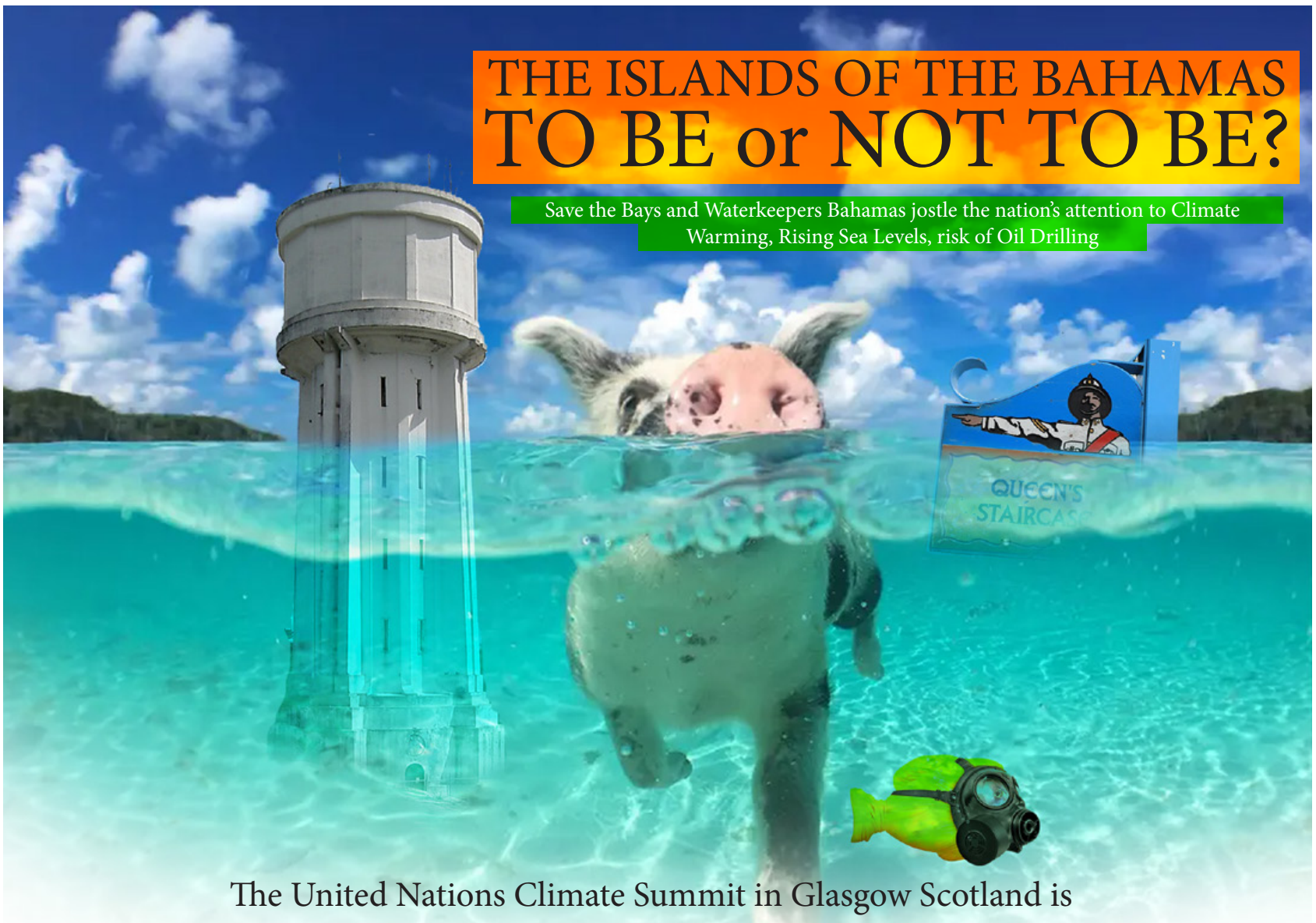


Waterkeepers Bahamas joined other activists to stage a protest against the Bahamas Petroleum Company's plan to drill for oil in Bahamas

- ering oil exploration when oil is leaking into every bay in the Bahamas, mostly from public corporations like the former Bahamas Electricity Corporation (BEC) now known as Bahamas Power and Light (BPL).
7. If the country can't control the environmental menaces that currently exist, then God forbid the destruction to the environment if oil is ever to be found.
 8. The Bahamian economy as done remarkably well as an eco-friendly, desirable tourism location. Allowing Oil explorations at sea puts these factors at serious and compelling high risks. The country will be "lost at sea". Much of who we are and what sustains us will come to an abrupt and consequentially environmentally disastrous end.
 9. "Save the Bays" is urging the Government to make no decision on whether to approve oil exploration in Bahamian waters until the necessary legislation, and EPA-style agency, are enacted, well-funded, and professionally staffed.
 10. Such an agency should also operate independent of Government control.
 11. Hence the need for an Environmental Protection Act, and statutory creation of an Environmental Protection Agency
 12. As currently constituted the BEST Commission is a Mickey Mouse operation which is simply for window dressing and pretense to make it appear as if Government seriously does care about the environment and attending issues in the Bahamas.
 13. Three Prime Ministers have hidden behind the veil of the BEST COMMISSION in international presentations when they know the truth. This hypocrisy has to end.
 14. The BEST Commission is not a body created by statute, meaning that its decisions and findings are not binding because they have no backing in law.
 15. As a result, the BEST COMMISSION can only act as an 'advisory' body to other government agencies, most notably the Office of the Prime Minister, and its conclusions do not have to be acted upon.
 16. Most troubling and disingenuous are the whole suite of 'draft' environmental Bills and regulations which remain posted on the BEST website, almost eight years after being released; but never acted upon.
 17. The Petroleum Act and regulations are "certainly a step in the right direction" when it came to dealing with pollution incidents in the Bahamas.
 18. But the Devil is in the details and one must ponder whose interests are sometimes served in convenient legislation which seems to have come about by pandering to special interests. The Bahamas is replete with environmental, Town Planning and development laws and regulations, but the executive branch of Government, in conspiring with foreign developers and their transaction attorneys override the laws passed by Parliament.

THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS TO BE or NOT TO BE?

Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas jostle the nation's attention to Climate Warming, Rising Sea Levels, risk of Oil Drilling



The United Nations Climate Summit in Glasgow Scotland is a fitting place to cap off the Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas 2021.

World leaders and advocates met in Scotland to reassure the world of a united effort and intensified focus on climate change, rising sea levels and the race to wean the planet off fossil fuels.

Representing the Bahamas was newly minted Prime Minister Philip E. Davis. Before leaving home for the Summit, Mr. Davis alerted the nation to his government's concerns about the threat to the very existence of the Bahama Islands from rising sea levels. He stressed the urgency of the moment in an effort to turn the developed world's attention to the grim and dire straits the Bahamas could find itself in.

Said the Prime Minister: "We cannot outrun your carbon emissions. We cannot outrun the hurri-

canes, which are becoming more powerful, and we cannot outrun our sea levels as our islands disappear."

The Prime Minister's words were fastidious, studious and compelling enough to earn the Bloomberg News 'Quote of the day' on 2nd November, 2021.

In 2021 the Bahamian people saw the value of uncompromising and independent advocacy by environmental groups like Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas in focusing the nation's attention on two of the biggest challenges facing the country.

These are: (1) Rising sea levels which scien-

tists and climatologists say threaten the very existence of 70 per cent of our islands; and (2) the question of where we stand on oil drilling and fossil fuels as we seek the world's support in addressing these serious issues.

In the fall of 2020 the controversial Bahamas Petroleum Company (BPC) and Simon Potter, its erstwhile CEO, announced the company's intention to begin drilling for oil off the Cay Sal Bank.

This announcement, while not initially staggering for the country's environmentalists as the company had been subject to a number of false starts for the better part of a decade, did reveal glaring issues in terms of public policy in this

country and the reluctance of politicians to make the hard calls.

Here are some of the facts:

1. BPC, a company traded on the London stock exchange and headed by a number of UK executives, had an association with law firms in the Bahamas which are connected to powerful politicians and government officials.
2. A former prime minister and a former deputy prime minister as well as a current senator and a former senator were actively engaged consultants, executives or attorneys for BPC.
3. BPC, at its inception, was a registered client of the law chambers of Philip Davis QC, then leader of the Official Opposition PLP party and as of 17th September 2021, Prime Minister of the Bahamas.
4. The original licenses for the exploratory drilling were issued by a former PLP government led by Perry G. Christie, when Mr. Davis served as Minister of Works in 2006.
5. In 2017 the FNM led by Dr. Hubert Minnis was elected to office. The FNM renewed BPC's licenses to drill for oil, claiming the former PLP administration had agreed to a deal which made such renewals mandatory.
6. Prime Minister Minnis insisted that he was absolutely opposed to oil drilling in the Bahamas.
7. The FNM government continued to claim its hands were tied and it was legally bound to continue renewing the licenses for oil drilling.
8. Environmental groups sprang into action with a detailed public relations campaign to educate the Bahamian people on the dangers of oil drilling around the fragile coral ecosystems of our island nation, and how fossil fuels like oil are connected to climate change.
9. Just a stone's throw away, powerful Congressmen in Florida announced they were appalled over the FNM government's decision to allow the oil drilling plan to continue.
10. These Florida officials were concerned that any freak incident or mishap or carelessness could put the multibillion-dollar tourist industry and luxury real estate market in South Florida and its keys in jeopardy.
11. A number of Bahamian fishermen also sounded the alarm that the exploratory drilling would churn deep water debris to the surface and disturb, if not destroy, reefs, estuaries, spawning grounds and other vital fisheries habitats.
12. The Hurricane Dorian disaster, descending upon the nation with such a tremendous and tragic impact, increased the awareness of Bahamians as to how intensifying weather calamities could cause an unthinkable offshore disaster for oil tankers, drilling apparatus and offshore platforms.
13. All these attendant critical factors were highlighted as part of the environmentalist's public relations campaign.
14. Research showed Bahamians were eager to learn more about global warming and rising sea levels. Increased interests in these topics became hot button social media issues.
15. Nevertheless, BPC dug in its heels and found a willing section of the local choir ready to chant a chorus about the great and lasting economic benefits of an oil find in the Bahamas; and the band played on.
16. Influential public policy figures like James Smith, a former State Minister of Finance and Governor of the Central Bank (and major BPC shareholder) derided the environmentalists. He exco-





- riated their messaging as emotional and said an oil find would significantly diversify the Bahamian economy.
17. Previous PLP governments, under which BPC cut its teeth, quite prematurely and eagerly passed a law in Parliament to create a Sovereign Wealth Fund. This fund as claimed to be the holding tank for any and all profits earned from the natural resources of the country, oil included.
 18. The same PLP government also introduced petroleum regulations after it granted BPC its first exploratory licenses.
 19. It would only be a fair conclusion, given the close ties between BPC and the former prime minister, the current prime minister and others within the PLP, that there would be much scrutiny of the party's record in seeking to create the conditions to allow oil drilling to move forward.
 20. But years of delay followed. For one reason or another, BPC did not begin to make use of its licenses to drill.
 21. After so many hiccups and more than a decade of inactivity, environmentalists were skeptical when the company said it would drill a test well, dubbed 'Perseverance 1', by the end of 2020.
 22. What's more, it was not clear that BPC had obtained the appropriate licenses and permits necessary to conduct such a drill from the government of the Bahamas, or that the approvals they did have had been issued properly by the authorities.
 23. Under the circumstances the environmental community did not feel the threat of oil drilling was imminent.
 24. It only became clear that BPC meant business this time – and that the government wouldn't stand in their way – when it was revealed that an enormous drill ship was preparing to cross the Atlantic from Europe, with the tiny island nation of the Bahamas in its crosshairs.
 25. Finding themselves on the back foot and almost out of time, environmentalists turned to Save The Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas, known for taking their advocacy before the courts in defense of the rule of law.
 26. The two groups announced their intention to launch a Judicial Review of the permitting process for the proposed BPC drill and asked the company to please not launch their daunting drill ship until a judge had had an opportunity to look at the facts.
 27. BPC ignored this request and the enormous Stena IceMAX launched from the Canary Islands, leaving STB and WKB with no choice but to engage in a pitched legal battle with the government to try and establish if the drill plan was being carried out illegally, before it was too late.
 28. In the Bahamas in a political season, the reasoning and the theory and the right and wrong of any issue is decided on political affinity and lineage.
 29. The FNM government, fighting the environmentalists vigorously in court even while claiming it didn't support oil drilling, was behaving like the bad boy who threw the rock that smashed the neighbor's window and now puts his hands behind his back and says, "It wasn't me".
 30. The PLP on the other hand, was stuck in a 1977 concept developed by the first PLP Majority Rule government under Sir Lynden Pindling, which began giving exploratory oil drilling licenses to multinational corporations like EXXON to drill in Bahamian waters.
 31. The oil crisis of the early 1970s, the oil embargo, the conflicts in the Middle East, the fall of the Shah of Iran, all compelled these oil giants to look for fossil fuels in more peaceful parts of the world. The Bahamas as a member of CARICOM was cognizant of how oil drove the economy of Trinidad and Tobago and how natural gas resources benefitted Guyana.
 32. Forty years ago, the planet did not have climate change theory, Al Gore was in junior high school and the respected scientists and climatologists of today who track these phenomena were more concerned about asteroids, earthquakes in Japan, monsoon rains in the Philippines, the frequency of tsunamis, eclipses of the sun and moon, dust storms over the

Sahara. No one had a melting glacier on their radar.

- 33. In the Supreme Court, Justice Petra Hanna Weeks allowed the oil drilling plan to continue as the Judicial Review got under way. BPC was applying to be heard and joined to the issue.
- 34. The Stena IceMAX made its way to the Cay Sal Bank and began churning a huge drill-bit into the sea floor, to the horror of environmentalists and Bahamians at large.
- 35. Meanwhile a flurry of activity was going on in the boardroom and corridors of BPC as the company sought to raise more capital and speculation grew about the success of their “find” on the Cay Sal Bank.
- 36. Some nervous social media watchers expressed concern that the oil trove BPC was pursuing may extend underground into Cuban territory and open up new diplomatic fusses.
- 37. BPC demanded that STB and WKB pay Security for Costs in order to proceed with the case and the court agreed.
- 38. This albatross around the neck of the weaker party has often been used to stifle public interest cases in the Bahamas, as advocates are made to cough up mega bucks before a hearing even begins, in order to demonstrate that they can pay the bill if they lose the case.
- 39. Nevertheless, STB and WKB managed to raise the \$200,000 Security for Costs just in the nick of time as thousands of advocates and concerned observers from



- around the world contributed, some only a few dollars, to the cause of protecting the Bahamas from the specter of oil drilling.
- 40. All of this was ongoing even as the cleanup in east Grand Bahama from the Equinor oil refinery spill was still underway.
- 41. In mid-February, BPC tells a sullen shareholders’ consortium that the drill having been completed, their find was commercially untenable.
- 42. Environmentalists rush to demand that due diligence be pursued to ensure that the test well is properly capped off and there is no imminent threat to a natural disaster.
- 43. In the midst of this, the then Leader of the Opposition Mr. Davis re-charged the debate by stating that his party supports oil

- drilling which “is environmentally friendly”.
- 44. Environmentalists target the oxymoron in Davis’s statement – there is no such thing as safe environmentally friendly offshore oil drilling.
- 45. Simon Potter is out as CEO. And BPC rebrands under a new name and corporate identity.
- 46. In August 2021 the environmentalists, government and BPC mutually agree to withdraw the court action, the ship having already sailed so to speak, as the drill was complete and had been found to be a failure.
- 47. The court case is deemed a huge success by environmentalists even though it was launched too late to prevent the drill. It raised huge international awareness of the need to protect the Bahamas’ precious natural resources and jostled the nation’s attention to the serious threat of climate change.
- 48. STB and WKB give notice that they stand ready to scrutinize and examine any future drill proposals that come along and will not hesitate to take action if these are not in accordance with the newly passed and very stringent Environmental Planning and Protection Act as well as other local laws.
- 49. In September a new government is elected led by Mr. Davis.
- 50. In November, at the United Nations Summit on Climate Change, Prime Minister Davis sounds the alarm to the nation and the world over the threat to our island nation’s very existence from fossil fuel-driven global warming.

WIREIMAGE.COM

NEWS

BPC BEGINS OIL DRILLING

FOLLOWING

BPC BEGINS OIL DRILLING DESPITE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

WE SHOULD OPT OUT EWNEWS.COM ENVIRONMENTALISTS RAMP UP RESISTANCE TO OIL DRILLING EB

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

IN THE BAHAMAS

TOTAL CASES	DEATHS
7,768	164
ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED
1,417	6,128

GLOBAL

TOTAL CASES	DEATHS
77,266,817	1,300,802

RECOVERED 6,128

RECOVERED 6,128

HOLDING HIM TO IT:

Environmentalists trust new PM Davis to keep pledge over PI Crown land deal with Royal Caribbean

Prime Minister Philip Brave Davis

STB Chairman Joseph Darville

Environmentalist group Save the Bays (STB) urged Prime Minister Philip Brave Davis to “move swiftly” in axing an agreement leasing Crown land on Paradise Island to Royal Caribbean.

The Crown land in question is some seven acres on Paradise Island some of which the former government had reportedly granted to Bahamian developer Toby Smith, but failed to give effect to the lease for before accepting a deal from Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (RCCL).

In June, then Opposition Leader Davis said if elected, he would cancel the RCCL agreement as “Crown land should be for Bahamians”.

Now that Davis is prime minister, STB Chairman Joe Darville fully expects him to follow through with that promise.

In a statement, Darville said: “Leading up to the election, Mr Davis and his colleagues laid firm emphasis on environmental conservation, both in their manifesto and on the campaign trail.

“In due course, we hope to see these commitments become reality in the form of policy and legislation.

“One such commitment was Mr Davis’ firm pledge to terminate any agreement that would result in Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines leasing Crown land on Paradise Island. STB wholeheartedly supports the prime minister on this matter and we fully trust that he will keep his word.”

RCCL is investing \$110 million in the development of its Royal Beach Club destination on Paradise Island, which is expected to generate an additional \$26 million in visitor spend; as compared to Smith’s proposal of a \$2 million restoration of Paradise Island’s lighthouse as well as the development of a “beach break” destination that he says would keep money circulating within the economy.

Darville, in his statement, rejected RCCL’s plans, asserting the “proposed project in its current form would threaten serious irreparable harm to the surrounding environment on a number of levels”.

“Shattering this historic, pristine oasis with huge construction works, massive crowds and the enormous volumes of solid waste and water pollution these will generate is



Entrepreneur Toby Smith 'bewildered' by site plan review for Royal Caribbean beach club

simply unthinkable," he said.

"The threat of permanent harm to the underground water table, the nearby thriving reef and harbor-facing waterfront properties on New Providence is far too great.

"In our view, RCCL's plans for environmental management are nowhere near sufficient given the level of risk such a project represents.

"Insufficient or improper management just a few miles from the largest population center in The Bahamas could create a serious pollution issue and potentially even a health crisis.

"The tiny western end of Paradise Island simply cannot become a mega-tourism destination. Any further development of the area must be restricted to low-impact, small footprint boutique projects that showcase rather than destroy our country's unique ecological heritage."

Darville added: "We thank Prime Minister Davis for recognizing the danger posed by this project, and urge him to move swiftly to make good on his promise."

Smith has likewise recently expressed confidence that the new Davis-led administration will resolve the matter, even as he remains embroiled in a court battle with the previous government over it.



Songwriter and performer KB on the set of the music video for "Das Why We Savin' Da Bays." KIRKLAND "KB" BODIE

Bahamian recording artist and producer Kirkland "KB" Bodie is unrelenting in his effort to engage his fans and the wider community in discussions on issues impacting the environment, as evidenced with the release of a new single "Das Why We Savin' Da Bays."

KB released the rake n' scrape single which explains the work that Save The Bays (STB) has been doing, on Monday, April 12, 2021. He has also recorded and released a music video.

"Das Why We Savin' Da Bays" song was written by KB while in Cuba following the devastating Hurricane Dorian in September 2019 when a 15-foot surge destroyed his Grand Bahama home. While out of the country, the artist said he read unflattering commentary which cast a shadow on all the work STB had been doing and that he responded in the best way he knew how – via song.

"They were questioning whether it was a political thing, and I knew then and there I had to write a song. Save the Bays stands up to the FNM and PLP. As I see it, our first priority is the environment," said Bodie.

"I had to tell the story of what Save the Bays was all about and all the things we have accomplished. Some people seem to think we are not serious or that it's all about politics. No – we actually care about the environment."

To date, KB says STB has vocally challenged more than a dozen unsustainable development projects.

Since joining the non-profit environmental group, and even before that, KB says he has written, produced and performed a number of songs aimed at bringing awareness to and fighting unregulated development and environmental degradation in The Bahamas.

"I have always heard the cliché, 'let's save it for our children', but if I save it for me, it will automatically be there for future generations."

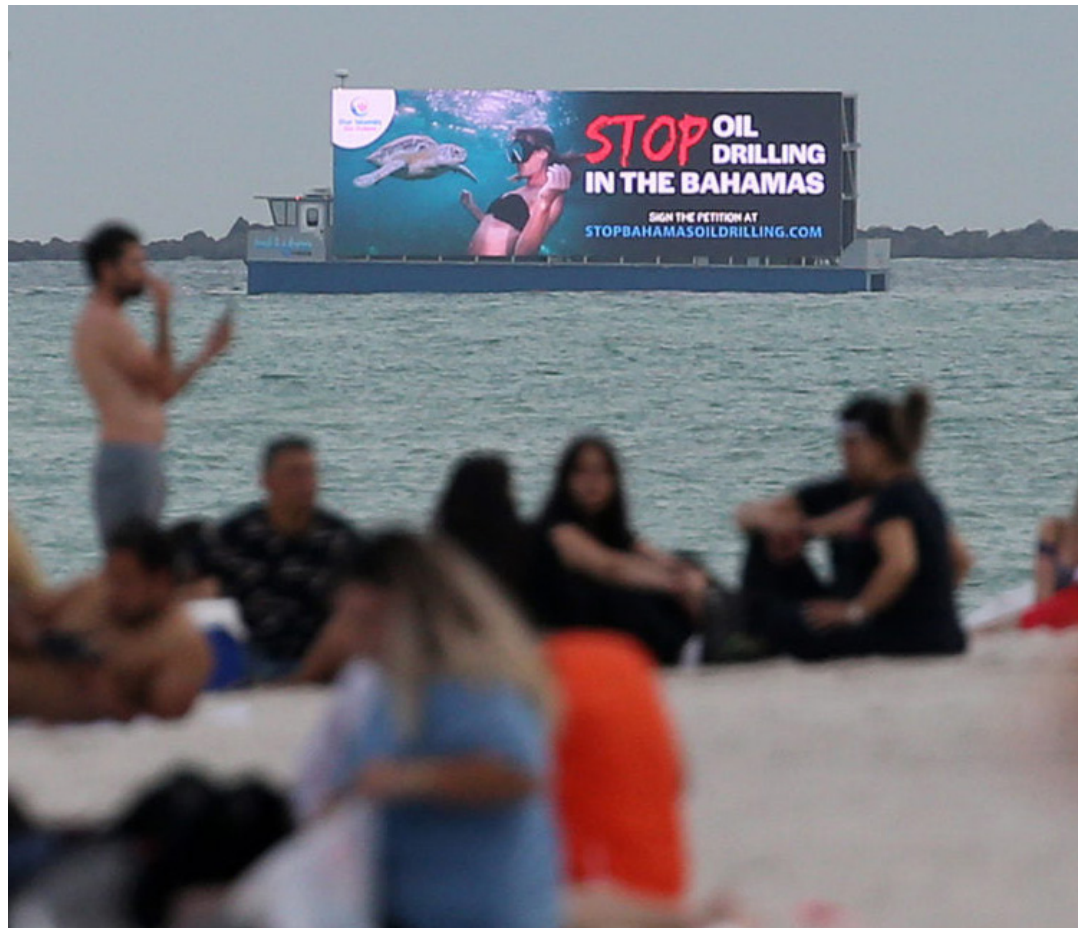
"This was a pivot to being more responsible and showing I'm not just a guy who can shake, but also one who could affect change."

The coronavirus pandemic has slowed the world down. While Bodie has missed his live shows, he says he's been working on writing and producing new material.

"When things get back to whatever is normal, you will see a volume of music being kicked out," he said.

DULY WARNED:

Environmentalists file to discontinue BPC judicial review



A Ballyhoo Media billboard sign against oil drilling in The Bahamas is seen on a South Florida beach in this photo provided by environmentalist coalition Our Islands, Our Future.

NASSAU, BAHAMAS — Environmentalists have filed an application in the Supreme Court to discontinue a judicial review of the

government's approvals for Bahamas Petroleum Company (BPC) to drill an exploratory well in Bahamian waters.

The consent order filed in August, requests that the judicial review action is discontinued and that each party bears its own costs.

In January, Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas requested the review to confirm whether BPC had attained all of the necessary permits and approvals under the law to carry out exploratory offshore drilling and to have the courts establish the proper, lawful procedure for projects of this kind going forward.

In a statement on the decision, the two advocacy groups branded the judicial review challenge a “huge success” in sparking global awareness and sending a strong warning to others that would seek to pursue a similar venture in the future.

Rashema Ingraham, executive director of Waterkeepers Bahamas, noted the enormous attention that the legal case drew to issues surrounding oil drilling in The Bahamas in general, both locally and abroad.

STB legal director Fred Smith, QC, lamented the fact that environmentalists continue to be priced out of justice by the government and developers ganging up on environmental activists and small business owners.

Smith said the challenge nevertheless put oil companies on notice that they must respect and adhere to all legal and regulatory requirements if they want to operate in The Bahamas.

“Whether you are Bahamas Petroleum Company (BPC) or any other entity, consider yourself duly warned: The Bahamas has a strong, outspoken environmental activist community that will aggressively challenge any project if it appears that the procedures mandated by law might not have been followed,” he said.

Smith insisted that BPC went ahead with its exploratory drilling before certain questions could be determined by the court.

Last-ditch threat to oil exploration

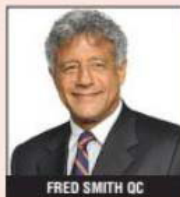
By NEIL HARTNELL
Tribune Business Editor
nhartnell@tribunemedia.net

ENVIRONMENTAL activists last night threatened to initiate legal action against the government and Bahamas Petroleum Company (BPC) within 14 days unless the latter halts its oil exploration plans.

Fred Smith QC, the Callenders & Co attorney and partner, fired off multiple letters to the prime minister, Cabinet ministers and relevant government agencies warning that his clients will seek to obtain a Supreme Court injunction blocking BPC's activities until such time as the merits of their Judicial Review are determined.

Acting on behalf of the

- Activists to launch BPC legal challenge in 14 days
- Will seek injunction unless voluntary halt agreed
- Say govt failed to follow lawful approval process



FRED SMITH QC

Our Islands, Our Future group, as well as Waterkeeper Bahamas and a "coalition" of unnamed "Bahamian citizens, local businesses and local and international environmentalists", Mr Smith argued

that the approvals granted to BPC breached assurances given by Dr Hubert Minnis, were contrary to the nation's international obligations, and did not follow legally-mandated processes.

In a letter to BPC's chief executive, Simon Potter, which was sent just hours after it revealed the vessel hired to drill its first well is poised to leave the Canary Islands for The Bahamas before end-November, Mr Smith urged the company to avoid the need for an injunction battle by giving a voluntary "undertaking" not to proceed with

the project.

"We... invite you to undertake not to proceed with the project until such time as a full and proper public consultation process has taken place," the Callenders & Co attorney urged Mr Potter.

"We hereby put you on notice that absent a satisfactory response within 14 days to this letter or to our letters sent today to the [government], we are instructed by our client to apply to the court for leave to bring Judicial Review proceedings."

be seeking oil drilling licenses in Bahamian territory now know that they will be carefully scrutinized every step of the way."

In March, the environmental groups involved in judicial review proceedings were ordered to pay \$200,000 as security for costs within the next 30 days to proceed.

BPC, which was added to proceedings in January as an interested party that carried out the exploratory oil drilling, sought security for costs in the sum of \$200,000.

In early February, BPC reported that drilling had ceased on the Perseverance #1 well, with the well permanently plugged and abandoned after commercial quantities of oil were not found.

"With that ship having already sailed, so to speak, we then offered to streamline the matter, as it had become impossible because of KYC challenges to set up the Security ordered by the court, to focus on the all-important second question of proper procedure and which laws apply to oil drilling," Smith added.

"However, BPC were unwilling to cooperate and so we had no choice but to accept their counter-offer that all parties mutually agree to bring the case to an end.

"But make no mistake, this challenge was a huge success. BPC and any other company that may

Oil explorer: 'We will pay double required royalties'

By NEIL HARTNELL
Tribune Business Editor
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A BAHAMAS-based oil explorer yesterday said it will "pay double the royalties that the law provides for" to the government should it strike success when exploratory drilling starts in less than a month.

Simon Potter, Bahamas Petroleum Company's (BPC) chief executive, speaking before the threatened legal challenge by environmental activists emerged (see other article on Page 1B), told Tribune Business that the company and Bahamian government will enjoy an equal 50/50 share of any proceeds should it discover commercial quantities of oil in this nation's waters.

Asserting that BPC's activities could produce up to a \$5bn revenue windfall for the government over the project's 10-20-year life, depending on the volume

- BPC chief: 'We're looking to get on with job'
- Aiming to settle outstanding licence fees
- Consultants to be posted on drilling vessel



SIMON POTTER

of oil found beneath the seabed, he reiterated the "tremendous difference" this could make to an economy afflicted by the ravages of COVID-19.

With BPC yesterday revealing that the Stena IceMAX vessel hired to drill its Perseverance One exploratory well is poised to leave the Canary Islands for The Bahamas by November's

end, in preparation for a December 15, 2020, operational start, Mr Potter told this newspaper: "We're looking forward to getting on with the job we've been trying to do for the last ten years."

"The royalty structure is embodied in law and the licence. The law establishes a royalty that we have to pay for the production of oil and gas, and the licence we signed provides more royalties on top of that."

"It doubles the amount of royalties we'd pay under the law. We agreed with the government many years ago to pay more royalties than the law provides for. Depending on the volume of oil it could double the royalties."

BPC's existing commercial terms with the government

involve a "sliding scale" of royalty fees, with the rates tied to production (the daily volume of oil, measured in per barrel terms) that is extracted from Bahamian waters.

The royalty rates range from a low of 12.5 percent for 75,000 barrels per day to a peak of 25 percent for 350,000 barrels per day or more, with a production licence granted for 30 years.

And, using a market price of \$80 per barrel of oil, BPC has said that once production costs - equal to around \$40 of this sum - are taken out, the remaining \$40 would be "split 50/50 between us and the government".

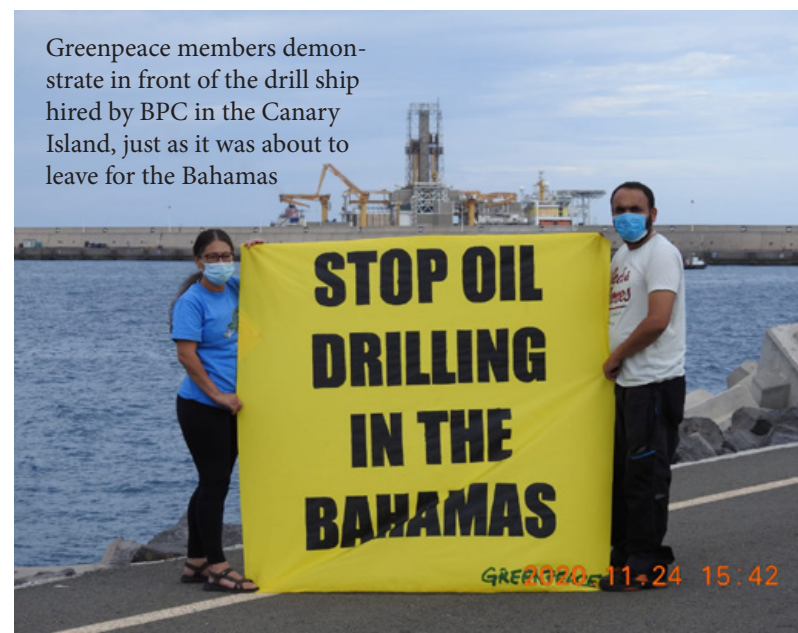
While the discovery of commercial oil quantities

The applicants opposed BPC's application on the basis that they were fundraising to finance the judicial review.


Smith sought to underscore yesterday why the environmental groups were forced to agree to end the case, noting that it was meant to be an inspection of a decision-making process undertaken by the government, and was not intended to take a long

time or be particularly costly for any of the parties involved.

BPC has said that while its first exploration well did not result in the discovery of commercial quantities of oil in The Bahamas, it intends to exercise its right to renew four of its licenses, which will allow for another three-year period for oil exploration.



Greenpeace members demonstrate in front of the drill ship hired by BPC in the Canary Islands, just as it was about to leave for the Bahamas



15% of Bahamas' GDP at risk due to climate change

'Radical change needed in climate fight'

Prime Minister Philip Brave Davis said that 15 percent of The Bahamas' gross domestic product (GDP) is threatened by climate change.

"When I speak of the threat of climate change, I am not talking about some far-off catastrophic event that will occur decades from now," Davis said while speaking at a climate change forum hosted by One Young World.

"Countries like mine are already experiencing those disasters today and hurricanes are far from the only threat that climate change poses.

"An estimated 15 percent of our national GDP and 11 percent of our people are threatened by the accompanying rise in sea level. Our marine life and fisheries are also at risk as climate change threatens the survival of critical marine habitats like coral reefs.

"We need big, radical changes to abate this trend and save countries like The Bahamas from a perilous fate. Every coastal region in the world has been — or will be — severely impacted by climate change in some way."

A study published last year found that 74

percent of tourism-based jobs in The Bahamas will likely be at risk due to a Category 5 hurricane by the year 2100.

It noted that such a storm's impact on beaches will likely lead to a decrease in visitor expenditure by nearly \$1 billion.

The Bahamas has already begun to feel both the environmental and economic impact of climate change.

Most Bahamian islands were affected by major hurricanes — all Category 4 and Category 5 storms — between 2015 and 2019.

Hurricane Joaquin, a Category 4 storm that hit Acklins, Crooked Island, Long Island, and other islands in the eastern Bahamas in 2015, caused more than \$113 million in damage.

Hurricane Matthew, also a Category 4 storm that devastated parts of Grand Bahama, Andros and New Providence the following year, caused over \$519 million in damage.

The direct and indirect costs of Hurricane Irma — a Category 5 storm that decimated Ragged Island and other islands in the southern Bahamas in 2017 — totalled more than \$119 million.

The catastrophe caused by Hurricane Dorian — the strongest storm to ever hit The Bahamas — in 2019, is estimated at roughly \$3.4 billion after it ravaged portions of Abaco and Grand Bahama.

The intensification and frequency of major hurricanes recently have widely been attributed to climate change.

Davis noted that climate change represents "the greatest existential threat that The Bahamas has ever faced".

"The time for action is now," he said.

"While we may be seeing the effects of climate change to some extent today, it is your generation that will bear the brunt of the impact in coming decades.

"That is not an outcome that any of us wants to live through. We must take immediate action to lower greenhouse gas emissions and meet the necessary global targets to achieve a climate-neutral world within the next 30 years."



STRENGTH in NUMBERS

The statistics are impressive and we are happy to share them with you.

Over 20,000 supporters on Social Media

Over 7,000 Petition Signatures

Save The Bays for Us!

SAVE THE BAYS
COALITION TO PROTECT CLIFTON BAY

www.savethebays.online



THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER!

NO MORE RISKY WELLS

SAVE OUR WATERS & LAND FROM OIL

SAY NO TO OIL DRILLING!

STOPBAHAMASOILDRILLING.COM

Our Islands Our Future

DID YOU KNOW?

In the last five years the Bahamas has seen frightening and tragically alarming increases in tropical hurricane weather patterns, all the results of CLIMATE CHANGE. Islands like Ragged Island, Eleuthera, Long Island, Grand Bahama, Abaco have been laid waste, hundreds of persons dying in climate disasters and communities ripped from the very foundation of the earth.



We are so happy to stimulate young minds and to give back to our communities!

As a part of her winning package, Khamani Farrington, our #Waterkeepers Bahamas summer essay competition winner, receives her Chromebook sponsored by @savethebays

Taking good care of our #Environment and watering young minds helps to ensure we have a future all of can enjoy!



For more information visit our website at
www.savethebays.online



Freeport's Blue Action Lab wins international prize for blue economic innovation



Freeport's Blue action lab has won the international prize for economic innovation awarded by Blue Climate Initiative (BCI). The blue action lab on Grand Bahama brings together leading innovators, entrepreneurs, and researchers to focus on climate change. The objective is to turn the urgent need for coastal climate solutions into a workable reality.

The award is given to innovative organizations working on place-based, sustainable solutions ranging from food security and renewable energy to ecosystem restoration and sustainable tourism. The Blue Action Lab was one of six organizations to receive the prestigious award out of more than 80 organizations from 45 countries and island nations around the world.

Rashema Ingraham, advisor to the Blue Action Lab and executive director of Waterkeepers Bahamas, said: "The Blue Action Lab understands the importance of inclusive and equitable sustainable development for the Bahamas, and I am looking forward to working with them and our communities both here in Grand Bahama, and in the wider Bahamas, to make sure the Blue Action Lab initiatives represent the concerns and aspirations of those communities."

Making a difference in the community feels great when we work together. Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas teamed up with the Grand Bahama Resilience Center and other civic groups for a joint cleanup on Xanadu Beach, Grand Bahama. Many hands make light work.

We live, work, and play in the crystal-clear waters of The Bahamas and from this Waterkeepers Bahamas launched its new online series of Faces of the Water, where everyday people share their unique experiences with the water.

Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas partnered for a Summer Essay Competition and was happy to see that the winners were passionate about expressing their concerns and ideas about intensifying hurricanes in the Bahamas, and their views on what we can do to be better prepared for them.

Winning essays:

Khamani Farrington: (Primary Division)
KHAMANT'S ESSAY

Tysha Johnson: (Junior Division) Tysha Johnson - Hurricane Essay

Antonio R. Taylor: (Senior Division)



Congratulations go out to our very own Waterkeeper Cadet Kaya Murray on her 2021 Outstanding Youth Award from The Ministry of Youth, Sports & Culture.



Kaya is a former Youth Environmental Ambassador with our Save The Bays Youth Program and a current Waterkeepers Cadet. Keep up the amazing work Kaya and we look forward to a future of excellence!



Oil drilling “absolutely against” this nation’s best interest, says climate change expert

Oil drilling is “absolutely against” this nation’s best interest as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, according to a local climate change expert and researcher.

Dr Adelle Thomas, director of the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Research Centre at the University of The Bahamas (UB) and a senior researcher at Climate Analytics, a climate science and policy institute, described climate change as a “national emergency”.



Director of the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Research Centre at the University of The Bahamas (UB) and Senior Researcher at Climate Analytics Dr Adelle Thomas.

“Some of the actions being taken now, such as moving forward with oil drilling and failing to include climate change as a key component of our COVID-19 recovery plans, are actually increasing our vulnerability to climate change,” she said.

Thomas, who addressed the Bahamas Business Outlook, said that her presentation looked at measures needed to mitigate the impact of climate change.

“We urgently need a national adaptation strategy. We need to mainstream climate change into all development decisions across all sectors and we need to strengthen public-private partnerships to address climate change,” she said.

With regards to oil drilling, Thomas said: “I think I think it’s absolutely against our best interest as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change to pursue oil drilling.

“It is the equivalent of us being in a sinking ship and asking the international community for help yet at the same time drilling holes in the hull and throwing out our lifeboats.”

IF THE U.S WON'T RISK IT WHY SHOULD WE?



The United States has banned offshore oil drilling along the Florida Coast because of its devastating effects.

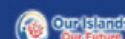
OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING IS:

- 1. A RECIPE FOR ECONOMIC DISASTER** → **70%** of Bahamians are employed in tourism & fisheries - one oil spill and they're unemployed again! 
- 2. DIRTY & DANGEROUS** → **880 MILLION** gallons are spilled from offshore oil drilling every year! 
- 3. NOT SUSTAINABLE** → **BPC needs to find 88 WELLS** operating at 100% capacity every day of the year to meet the value of our **SUN, SAND & SEA!** 

To find out more visit: www.ourislandsourfuture.org



@ourislandsourfuture





Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas assisted in the 36th Annual International Coastal Cleanup hosted by The Ministry of Tourism and Aviation on September 18th, 2021. Over 800lb of trash in total being collected, Waterkeepers Bahamas was stationed at the Xanadu Beach where most trash collected was pieces of plastic.

“Rashema Ingraham, executive director of Waterkeepers Bahamas, said they are always eager about partnering with other groups in Grand Bahama during ICC.

“Waterkeepers is focused on swimmable, fishable, and drinkable waters. We know how important it is to have regular collections of data to tell the story of environmental conditions. Over the years, ICC has been able

to paint a vivid picture of the coastal pollution issues throughout the world,” she said.

She said that the data collected during these cleanups helps to set the tone for legislation, policies, and bans on plastics around the world.

Save the Bays and Waterkeepers collected a total of 72lbs of trash.

Waterkeepers Bahamas joins Piper's Angels Foundation and 4Ocean for environmental workshop and cleanup in Bimini



Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas participated this past June in collaboration with Crossing for Cystic Fibrosis, 4Ocean and Piper's Angel on the beautiful island of Bimini.

A workshop facilitated by Waterkeepers Bahamas was conducted on the importance of clean water. Afterwards a beach cleanup was held, collecting trash weighing in at 536 pounds!

Photo Credit: Eye Witness News



Thank You So Much!

Our Environmentalists: The Praetorian Guards of our fragile Environment and Eco-Systems

The Calypsonian says if "the good Lord took a vacation"; the Islands of the Bahamas- their natural unspoiled beauty, peace and charm; would be the destination of choice.

We take for granted what goes in to protecting our sunny clime,
maintaining the perpetual isle of June;
The poinsettia in bloom.

The Spring Periwinkles, Night Jasmine and Wild Orchids,
The welcome mats of our lazy beaches,
Our unique Forests.
The Water Table.

The Bahama Parrot, White Crown Pigeons nesting; the Pink Flamingoes
in flight.

The Conch spawning, the Lobster sea marathon, our Fishery Estuaries
and the Coral unfolding their beauty.

Let us say a well-deserved THANK YOU to the noble, selfless men
and women and students and citizens and international friends of our
Environmental Activists and Environmental organizations who never tire
or compromise their principals. Often maligned, blocked and frustrated.
Yet our Environmentalists never abandon their duty.

Because of what our ENVIRONMENTALISTS do "ALL THINGS CAN
BE BRIGHT , WONDERFUL, SAVED, PRESERVED, PROTECTED
AND BEAUTIFUL".

Thanks Guys!

Climate Change is Real!

**We must prepare the Nation for the imminent threat of
Climate Warming.**

**The certified universal scientific position is that our country
is one of only four (4) on the Planet Earth most likely to
disappear in the next 25 years from rising SEA LEVELS caused
by fossil fuels.**

Our children deserve a future not a death sentence.

