



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands Calls for government to consider a ‘do maximum’ option for cargo port expansion at current George Town site

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In providing feedback to the Outline Business Case for the Cargo Port Expansion, The National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) is urging government officials to add a ‘do maximum’ option at the current George Town site based on managed population growth of 150,000 rather than the 250,000 figure currently used as a basis for the report.

George Town has been the site of Cayman’s port for hundreds of years due to its favourable conditions; it sits in the lee nearly every day of the year, deep water comes close to shore, and after all this time as the port its proximity to population and man modified status make it an appealing location to remain as the port into the future.

The current business case includes two options for the George Town port, ‘do nothing’ and ‘do minimum’. The NTCI feels that a ‘do maximum’ option should be included which improves the current site so that it could support a more realistic population level capped at 150,000.

The Outline Business Case relies on a projected population of 250,000 in 2084, which would include over 150,000 non-Caymanians at the current birth rate. The National Trust believes this high growth rate is not only unsustainable but undesirable and cannot be supported by the country’s infrastructure or by Caymanians who would become even more significantly outnumbered under these projections. Instead, the National Trust recommends including multiple population scenarios in the report for a more informed decision-making process as part of an overall plan for the future of the Cayman Islands.

“The recent population growth has strained the natural environment and necessitated major infrastructure projects driven by a desire for economic growth,” said Frank Roulstone, executive director of the National Trust. “As Cayman’s population growth is due to immigration rather than birth rates, it is within our government’s power to control the growth rate. We would like to see government consider an additional option for port expansion at the current site based on a more reasonable population of 150,000 and a more favourable ratio of Caymanians to non-Caymanians.”

The National Trust flagged concerns about relocating the cargo port to a new location, particularly the options proposing construction near the Breakers quarries, highlighting the environmental damage to both terrestrial and marine life and surrounding ecosystems. They also raised concerns about traffic and the



additional burden on infrastructure in the Eastern districts and the viability of a port with a north-south channel given the prevailing wind patterns to function safely throughout the year.

“We would like Government to take a cautious, data-driven approach to the port expansion and advocate for full transparency, including an Environmental Impact Assessment before any construction begins. We also strongly believe that the population scenarios considered for the port should be applied across all government projects including development planning, waste management and transport so that there is more correlation between these large capital projects which will have an enormous environmental, social and economic impact on all three islands,” said Melanie Carmichael, Chairman of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands.

Under the National Trust Law (2010), the National Trust, on fulfilling its duties to protect Cayman’s native flora and fauna, as well as the natural and built heritage, is tasked with advising government and other relevant parties on any effects thereon. [The full comments by the National Trust can be read here.](#)

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About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organization whose mandate under the National Trust Law (2010 Revision) includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Cayman Islands for present and future generations.

About the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme

The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme began in 1990 with only 30 dedicated Blue Iguanas and the primary goal to restore the wild population to 1,000 Blue Iguanas, encouraging viable population in the long-term. Having met its primary goal in 2018, the initiative formally transitioned to the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme in 2019 with a new focus of sustainably conserving the native species of Grand Cayman.

About the National Trust's Environmental Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' environmental programme was founded on the concept that the protection of native plants and animals is best achieved by protecting the natural areas in which they depend.

About the National Trust Conservation Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' conservation programme strives to protect Cayman's native species and the habitats in which they live, and includes the endemic Blue Iguana of Grand Cayman, the Sister Islands Rock Iguana and Cayman's native bat species.

About the National Trust Historic Preservation Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands introduced the launching of its *Historic Preservation Fund* at its Annual General Meeting in September 2021 for the purpose of inviting increased support of its continuing efforts to encourage the preservation and protection of historic homes and buildings for present and future generations of the Cayman Islands.