

May 07, 2021

**SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO THE EIA FOR CRUISE SHIP AND RESORT OPERATIONS  
PROPOSED BY DISNEY AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT**

**LEVERAGING THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF OUR NATURAL CAPITAL ASSETS**

The case for growing the Eleuthera economy centered around environmental research and discovery and related stay-over eco-tourism on a small portion of the Lighthouse Point property is highly compelling in comparison to the thin economic value to the community of Disney's proposed day-trip cruise ship tourism. The economic benefits are 27+ times greater for the sort of stay-over eco-tourism that a local consortium of organizations, Lighthouse Point Partners (to which I have been an advisor), has proposed to the Bahamian government, combined with a world-class environmental research institute onsite. The sustainable full and part-time and year-round job creation is multiples higher than what Disney cruise ship tourism offers. See the Lighthouse Point Partners' complete report here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WeJcG7QJZqANNC2tjVvFYeaXp7LOhjmI/view>

I write in strong support of The Island School alternative proposal to Disney's planned cruise ship resort at Lighthouse Point. Chris Maxey, The Island School Founder, proposes to establish instead the Disney Center for Research and Innovation and a Land and Sea Legacy Park at Lighthouse Point as outlined in his letter to Disney Chairman Robert Chapek dated April 6, 2021. This proposal is consistent with the Lighthouse Point Partners' vision plan for the site as described in the link above.

**DISNEY CRUISES AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT WOULD PERPETUATE COLONIALISM**

"I can't imagine a giant pier and highway and buses for 1000s of tourists," said a prominent local in South Eleuthera. Either can anyone else—especially since no one has seen any image of what it might look like. In short, there is nothing environmentally sustainable about cruise ships at Lighthouse Point.

Here's one image of what that pier could look like, based on the Disney site plan. It's pretty terrifying:



Further, a fixed in-water vehicular pier (the quarter billion dollar “bridge to nowhere”) is the most inelastic and potentially damaging solution to a highly elastic problem: transporting cruise ship passengers between ship and shore.

Should Disney management decide in the future to roll back cruise operations in the Bahamas (due to high fuel prices, terrorism, another pandemic, other), this half-mile long pier will not easily go away. It will remain a sorry reminder of a moment when local political leadership caved to the powerful American corporation.

We said that cruise ships are welcomed in the Bahamas and our group would help identify an alternative resort location that did less harm than at LHP. Disney transformed vast central Florida swamp into a beloved tourism destination. They are the ultimate masters of creating stagecraft and theater from virtually nothing. They have the talent and resources to transform most any site into something their customers will enjoy. They don’t need pristine. They don’t need LHP.

This is a moment in history when all of the United States and much of the world beyond is finally beginning to seriously reckon with centuries of cruel and unjust racist policies, including appalling histories in the Caribbean. Just this year, the President of the United States has made history and won accolades by appointing a Native American woman as the Secretary of the Interior overseeing our most majestic and sacred places in the U.S.. In this context, it is more confounding and disturbing than ever that a powerful White male-dominated American corporation like Disney would continue to pursue unnecessary and offensive development efforts in a poor community of people predominantly of African descent, essentially perpetuating the cruelty and cynicism of Colonialism. Disney’s cruise resort artifice proposed for Lighthouse Point runs the risk of erasing the distinctive and profound cultural significance of this sacred native settlement and former slave trading site by attempting to impose its outsider, stage-set culture on this community, and building unnecessary and intrusive, damaging development in our beloved, pristine natural environment.

A Disney Center for Research and Innovation and a Land and Sea Legacy Park at Lighthouse Point, in partnership with The Island School and other local and world-class partners, would do the opposite.

James F. Lima, President