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PRESS RELEASE
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OPPOSITION CALLS FOR DISMISSAL OF NRCA BOARD OVER BREAKWATER CONTROVERSY

Opposition Spokesman on the Environment, Dr. Andrew Wheatley, is today calling for the dismissal of the Natural Resources Conservation Authority's (NRCA) board of directors following an announcement that they granted approval for two highly controversial off-shore breakwaters to be built in the Long Bay area of Negril, Westmoreland.

The NRCA board is chaired by former PNP MP, Mr. John Junor. Other directors include former PNP Candidate, Dr. Carol Archer, and PNP Councilor Ms. Kari Douglas, daughter of NHT Board Chairman Mr. Easton Douglas.

Dr. Wheatley pointed out that the NRCA Board's decision runs counter to its mandate, which is to provide for the management, conservation and protection of the natural resources of Jamaica. He noted that the NRCA did not sufficiently take into account the views of members of the Negril community and experts here and overseas who have consistently, loudly and factually rubbished the breakwater proposal. Beyond that Negril stakeholders have put forward serious proposals that are less expensive, more effective and environmentally friendly.

Dr. Wheatley restated the Opposition's position that Beach Nourishment is the preferred approach to rehabilitating the Negril shoreline. The Opposition Spokesman says he has no choice but to seriously question the government's motives in its mad rush to pursue what is a dubious, risky and very expensive plan.

Dr. Wheatley pointed out that the JLP in August of this year, supported by an analysis of global trends in coastline protection, a review of the position taken by NEPA on the issue and consultations with Negril stakeholders came to the conclusion that beach nourishment is the way to go.

Dr. Wheatley reiterated the main areas of concern:

The absence of a comprehensive Economic Impact study into the effects of pursuing the highly technical and disruptive project that the Government says will run for several months.
An incomplete Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and;
The gross lack of genuine consultation by the Government with Negril stakeholders, including Hoteliers, and an apparent gross lack of concern for the very serious issues raised by them in the public domain.

Dr. Wheatley expressed deep concern on what appears to be the NRCA's very arrogant positioning on a project that can have serious and negative consequences for Jamaica on a whole.

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