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**National News**

By TAMARA McKENZIE, Guardian Political Editor

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[tamara@nasguard.com](mailto:tamara@nasguard.com)

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Many Bahamians are afraid that the 10,000-acre residential development in Mayaguana will shatter the cultural, demographic, environmental and social landscape of that island, claimed the Free National Movement (FNM) on Sunday.

"The PLP [Progressive Liberal Party] anchor is threatening to drown Mayaguana. If the PLP is re-elected, Mayaguana may be the tip of the iceberg with [Prime Minister] Perry Christie as captain of Titanic Bahamas," outlined the FNM in its weekly commentary issued to the press. Island after beautiful island stand to be given over to foreign real estate developers and that will destroy The Bahamas as we know it."

As the election campaign heats up and each party puts forth a position and various views to sway the voting masses, the FNM on Sunday claimed that environmentalists around the world have warned against the types of projects that are presently being proposed by the PLP. The Party noted that local environmentalists are outraged and stunned by the massive and unprecedented assault on land and marine resources, including water tables, hard wood trees, beaches, reefs, mangroves and wetlands.

According to the FNM, the PLP laid out its economic "vision" in three sections of its 2002 manifesto: Rescuing the Economy, Implementing A National Development Strategy and Energizing the Bahamian Tourism Industry, but unfortunately, they mismanaged, rather than rescued the economy; implemented a disastrous model of development; and missed critical opportunities to increase Bahamian ownership of the tourism industry.

"Missing from the PLP's platform was what has been the central focus of its economic misadventure: the promotion of large-scale tourism anchor projects cum mega residential gated communities throughout the country," the FNM noted. "Even though many of their plans have not materialized, the PLP's goal is obviously to pursue hyper-growth, rather than sustainable development, and they are willing to alienate tens of thousands of acres of Bahamian land in the process."

The Opposition Party pointed out that while The Bahamas needs golf courses for tourists and Bahamian golfers, we simply cannot afford a proliferation of golf courses for these mega residential developments, such as those on Buck Cay in the Exuma Cays or at

Baker's Bay on Great Guana Cay.

The Party said it also has similar reservations about the indiscriminate approval to dredge and construct marinas throughout The Bahamas and queried whether the PLP could be entrusted to look after those vital interests of the Bahamian people, mainly because it is unable to complete the infrastructural improvements and projects the FNM left behind.

"Can we now trust them to put in place further infrastructure and monitoring capabilities for the massive projects they are approving?" the FNM questioned. "How will they plan and pay for the roads, airports, docks, police, customs and immigration services? But, more importantly, what about our people?"

According to the FNM, the PLP's anchor project schemes can have many negative and irreversible cultural and demographic effects on Family Islands and much of the local culture is in danger of being lost forever.

The Party also attacked the PLP for "bragging" about being a government of consultation, but claimed that it has failed to consult with the people on the destiny of their communities and the direction of their lives.

The FNM said their Party is pledged not only to carry out environmental impact studies with each development but also social impact studies in consultation with local governments and with residents.

"The FNM Government will help people in the various islands to participate in the development of their own communities by way of training, technical assistance and access to financing. And we will most certainly not give away Bahamian land to foreigners for real estate development with insignificant benefit to Bahamians," the Party noted.

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