

Good Evening distinguished members of Congress and our Delegate to Congress Donna Christensen and other distinguished guests and audience.

I am Lorelei Monsanto, a St. John resident and member of the One Campus group. I Would like to thank you in advance for the opportunity to give my presentation to the Committee on Natural Resources on H.R.

53 also known as the 'Virgin Islands National Parks Lease Act'.

St. John has no doubt been changed by the existence of the National Park Service. I do believe the various agencies that support the park and its growth will support this Initiative to acquire lands to demonstrate a team effort to educate the local populous of students that reside on St. John.

Brief History:

1. The overall population of students on St. John in both the private and public sector is proximately seven hundred students and growing with the rash of development on the island.
2. The current educational complexes on the island of St. John are crumbling, dark, located in congested areas and have out grown their overall usefulness. (see Photos)
3. Due to lack of land space on St. John and overall planning for the future we are at a point where our partners, Jackson Hole Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Friends of the National Park ,Students, Parents and all concerned groups on the island of St. John have recognized that we must become team players in this venture.
4. Private sector has established a school on St. John that clearly states for a need for a K-12 on the island. Their location is quite hilly and provides some difficulties in expansion and diverication.

Investigation:

1. Lawrence Rockefeller donated lands with a special stipulation that lands be held to enhance the local population on the island of St. John. Our Delegate to Congress was advised be a Mr. Clayton Frye Jr. on November 10, 2006 that Jackson Hole Preserve retains no properties that might be suitable for such a purpose, and find that we do not at this time own any land on the island.

Investigation reveals lands were liquidated with an apparent disregard for Mr. Rockefeller's wishes. (See attachment)

2. Discussion of swapping local Virgin Island land and or cays with the National Park Service in 2006 raised a HUGE PUBLIC OUTCRY against such an action.

3. Mrs. Ethel May Bishop died March 2006. She conveyed a deed to the United States National Park in 1968. That parcel known at Number 6 Estate Catherinberg consist of fifty five (55) acres of land more or less and is not subject to any reversionary clause. The NPS noted that this is just one of several land parcels managed be the National Park Service that has this condition. However based on location this parcel seems to be the best location for the project we are now considering. (Death certificate and deed of conveyance attachment)

4. This opportunity will provide to me the most educational venture in the NPS and Virgin Islands and Congress. St. John needs are truly unique and this joint venture will enable the National Park Service and the department of Education to construct a school complex that adds marine biology, botany , National Park Service Mid-island Visitor's Center and educational complex all under one environmental friendly environment.

Overview:

It is my belief that this request for a lease will enhance the overall position on the National Park Service and The Virgin Islands. With the goal of incorporation NPS programs with the Educational programs the possibilities are limitless. And investigations on leasing NPS land now exist in the Park system.

Preservation of the Bishop home, educating the student with NPS programs, advising the visitors to St. John how this co-adoption enhances the knowledge power of kids learning both inside and outside of the classroom

The Bill HR 53 is an excellent solution to the educational goals. I have a few suggestions that might enhance the bill: 1. that the Secretary Interior request that a volunteer school board be set up to work along with the NPS on this plan. 2. Design of the school is done by a certified school design group with environmental friendly design. 3. Clear request of 55 acres of the land. 4. It was the intent with the formation of the NPS that an area be designated for such a purpose.

In conclusion, I know that this bill will become a reality. We are ready to forge ahead to make this a reality.

Thanking you again for having this hearing respectfully yours Lorelei Monsanto