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Mrs. Sheri Meyers
President,
St. Thomas West End Alliance
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802

Subject: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Solar Farm Development in the Fortuna-Bordeaux Area

Dear President Meyers:

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed solar farm project in the Fortuna-Bordeaux area. As a resident of the Fortuna Bay community for over fifty-four years, I find it both troubling and disheartening that neither the developer nor the Government of the Virgin Islands saw fit to hold public consultations or community meetings prior to advancing such a significant development proposal.

It has come to my attention that there is now a tentative date of **Tuesday, November 18, 2025**, for a lease hearing related to this project in the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on St. Thomas. This lack of early engagement leaves our community feeling excluded from decisions that will directly affect our homes, health, and environment.

Over the years, residents of the West End have faced repeated hardships following storms — blocked roadways, downed poles, and debris often cutting us off from access to town for days at a time. Before any large-scale project proceeds, we deserve clear answers about how it will impact our already vulnerable infrastructure and environment.

Additionally, I raise serious health and safety questions that remain unanswered. The West End has been documented as having higher-than-average diabetes rates. Has any study been conducted to determine possible environmental factors behind this trend? We also have two existing towers in the area managed by the federal government, and to date, no one has explained whether these could be linked to the troubling number of cancer cases among West End residents.

Before we move forward with this project, we must carefully evaluate both the benefits and risks of installing a large solar facility within a mile of residential properties:

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Pros of Solar Farms Near Residential Areas

- Renewable Energy Source: Reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels and supports the territory's sustainability goals.
- reduced Carbon Emissions: Improves local air quality and contributes to environmental protection.
- Potential Economic Benefits: May create temporary construction jobs and limited local maintenance employment.
- Grid Resilience: Could help stabilize power supply and reduce outages if properly integrated with WAPA's grid.

Cons of Solar Farms Near Residential Areas

- Visual and Aesthetic Impact: Large panels and fencing may alter the rural, scenic character of the community.
- Heat and Glare Effects: Concentrated solar reflection can affect nearby homes and vegetation.
- Noise and Dust During Construction: Potentially disruptive to residents and wildlife.
- Property Value Concerns: Some studies suggest proximity to utility-scale solar farms can reduce nearby residential property values.
- Ecological Impact: Possible harm to native plants and animal habitats if land clearing is extensive.
- Public Transparency Issues: When projects advance without consultation, communities lose trust in both developers and public agencies.

I have always cherished the tranquillity and natural beauty of the West End, which is why many of us have worked tirelessly over the years to deter commercial encroachment and preserve our environment. This proposed solar farm threatens to alter that balance.

I urge the West End Alliance to demand immediate public hearings and full disclosure regarding the project—its developer, scope, and environmental impact studies—before any lease is approved. Our representatives and policymakers owe this community transparency, respect, and accountability when it comes to decisions that affect our homes, health, and way of life.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. I look forward to hearing how the Alliance will address these concerns on behalf of our residents.

Respectfully,



Delvin D. Duggins