



Sociaal Economische Raad
Social Economic Council

To the Hon. Prime Minister of Sint Maarten
Mrs. S.A. Wescot-Williams
Philipsburg
Sint Maarten

Philipsburg, October 15, 2012

Our reference: SER /12/AA/076

Re: Questions regarding the possible construction of drag race strip and cricket stadium

Honorable Prime Minister,

Recently an initiative to engage in the construction of a drag race strip and a cricket stadium has become apparent through press coverage and observations by the general public, most notably of the filling activities in the north-western part of the Great Salt Pond, the assumed location of the drag race strip. Some sources assume the cricket stadium will be built on reclaimed salt pond land as well. Unconfirmed reports place the cricket stadium in Bethlehem (Dutch Quarter).

To our knowledge, there have been no public statements so far by any member of the Council of Ministers clarifying this project or projects. Moreover, a statement by the hon. Prime Minister of Wednesday, October 3, 2012 indicates that the Council of Ministers has no knowledge of who authorized the filling in of the Salt Pond in connection with such a project.

This lack of information on projects with obvious considerable socio-economic, environmental and financial consequences raises certain questions, especially as some actions (filling of part of the Salt Pond) will probably have irreversible consequences.

As it is the task of the SER to advise Government on important social economic issues, the council requests the following information regarding the issue described above.

- A. Regarding the filling activities in the north-western part of the Great Salt Pond
 - 1. What is the actual reason or background of the recent filling in of the north-western part of the Great Salt Pond?
 - 2. If the reclaimed area of the Great Salt Pond will not be used for a drag race strip and/or a new cricket stadium when will the sand be removed from the Great Salt Pond?
- B. Regarding the possible construction of a drag race strip in the great salt pond:
 - 1. What is the status of any project entailing the construction of a drag race strip in the Great Salt Pond?
 - 2. Did an economic impact study regarding a drag race strip take place, i.e. has the effect on the investment climate, economic activity, demand for labor and on economic growth been investigated?



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3. What are the total investments the construction of the drag race strip entails, and what are the projected financial sources for these investments?
4. What impact will the investments have on the government finances?
5. How does construction of a drag race strip fit in with the policies of this government regarding zoning, the allocation of public space, and protection of the environment?
6. What is the business concept of the projected drag race strip? Is the government or a private party going to operate the strip? What are the projected structural costs and revenues for government in either case?
7. Has an environmental impact study been conducted regarding the consequences of filling part of the salt pond for the water management situation?
8. Has an environmental and health impact study been conducted regarding the project's impact on the surrounding areas, more specifically on the quality of life of the people living in the adjacent neighborhoods, taking into account noise pollution and air pollution, and possible health risks this may entail?

C. Regarding the construction of a cricket stadium

1. What is the status of any project entailing the construction of a new cricket stadium in the Salt Pond or any other location?
2. Was the choice for a new cricket stadium – as opposed to a facility for a different sport or a multifunctional facility – based on a sports participation study among the population of Sint Maarten?
3. Was an economic impact study or feasibility study conducted regarding a new cricket stadium, taking into account among other factors the possible impact on (sports) tourism?
4. How does the construction of a new cricket stadium fit into the sports policy priorities of this government?
5. What are the financial consequences of the investments in a cricket stadium for the government budget?
6. Was a cost-benefit analysis made of the choice for an entirely new stadium compared to upgrading of existing facilities?

The SER would appreciate receipt of the information requested within three weeks¹ from date of this letter.

Respectfully,

R.A. Richardson
Chairman

G. Richardson
Secretary-General

¹ AB 2010,GT no. 26