

February 18, 2020

Her Excellency
Minister of Spatial Development, Infrastructure and Environment
Mrs. Marisol Lopez-Tromp
Bestuurskantoor
Oranjestad

Your Excellency,

As per various reports in past years (including Witteveen + Bos and TNO Caribbean), the outdated Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) at Bubali Plas is in urgent need of being replaced with new technology and larger capacity.

The Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association (AHATA) has immense concern for the dangers the current situation presents to our island:

1. The foul odor in the area can be experienced by visitors staying in neighboring accommodations, due to the plant's lack of capacity.
2. The seepage of the wastewater that causes damage to our corals/marine life.
3. The seepage, overflow and potential leak into the ocean between Eagle Beach and Palm Beach presents imminent danger to the beaches of Aruba and poses a health risk to our citizens and visitors.

In addition to the need to protect our nature, contamination of our beaches would cause irreparable damage to Aruba's economic pillar: tourism. Due to a lack of proper maintenance funding for many years, the WWTP has not been updated as is required. The situation is urgent and in need of a proper solution.

We are pleased to receive confirmation that the repair for the Concrete Oxidation Ditch will soon begin. Meanwhile, a long-term solution for the New Aeration System is still required.

One possible solution that was presented to AHATA recently, is the proposal by "Seven Seas Water". Their proposal proves that there is a viable opportunity for Aruba to enter an agreement with a private company for them to "invest, operate, maintain" the WWTP.

The business model would require investment in the upgraded plant, investment in infrastructure to distribute treated grey water for irrigation, and in ongoing maintenance.

This model has two significant benefits:

1. It requires no public funds to invest in the plant.
2. It requires no public funds for ongoing maintenance.



Considering that we are in this urgent position due to lack of funding, AHATA considers this “invest, operate, maintain” model as presented by Seven Seas, as the best option to solve the problem.

AHATA recommends for Aruba to open the project up to bid to private companies, based on the model presented in Seven Seas proposal. The RFP should include all those elements, including ongoing maintenance as well as investing in a distribution infrastructure for the treated grey water, so the plant can be financially self-sustainable in the long term.

It is our understanding that if government funds are used to upgrade the plant, there is no guarantee that ongoing maintenance would be covered in the budget going forward. Consequently, we do not recommend this option.

If our government opens a bidding process, with specific requirements for an integral plan to invest, operate, maintain, and the ability to find a market (such as hotels) for the grey water to be used for irrigation, Aruba would have a solid solution for all the issues relating to the waste water plant and the danger that is lurking between Eagle Beach and Palm Beach.

We urge the government to begin this process as soon as possible and seek the best resolution for our citizens and our tourism industry.

We are available for any further questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tisa LaSorte', is positioned above the printed name.

Tisa LaSorte
President and CEO

cc: Prime Minister of Aruba, Mrs. Evelyne Wever-Croes
Minister of Tourism, Public Health and Sport, Mr. Danguillaume Oduber
DOW, Mr. Marlon Croes
DOW, Mr. Frank Benita
A.T.A. Mrs. Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes
AHATA Board of Directors