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Environmentalists welcome scrapping of Goat Island project

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An aerial view of Goat Islands. (File photo)

KINGSTON, Jamaica — The Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC) and the International Iguana Foundation has congratulated the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) in light of news that the Government would not be handing over the Goat Islands to China Harbour Engineering Company to build a proposed \$1.5 billion transshipment port.

The announcement was made last week at a town hall meeting in New York City in which Prime Minister Andrew Holness was asked directly about the status of the islands. Holness elaborated by stating “there are other locations [for the port] that would do less environmental damage,” the release mentioned.

“The development would have jeopardised the last remaining habitat of the critically endangered Jamaican iguana in the Hellshire Hills on the mainland, sending more than 25 years of work in recovering the species up in smoke, and killed the vision of creating a haven free of introduced predators for the iguana on the Goat Islands,” said Robin Moore, conservation biologist and GWC communications director. “Having spent so much time involved in this project, and for the most part feeling pretty discouraged about prospects for the area, the species, and all who have worked so hard to bring the iguana back, this news is like a powerful jolt of inspiration,” he added.

An international study conducted by companies in the United Kingdom and the United States concluded that there are cheaper and less environmentally damaging alternatives to Goat Islands for the location of the transshipment port that China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) proposed to build as part of the Government's logistics hub.

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