

Antigua Conservation Society Inc. (ACS), "Gaston Browne: Don't let Chinese Developers break laws conserving our Marine Protected Areas", *Change.org*, Estados Unidos, [s.f.].

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<https://www.change.org/p/gaston-browne-prime-minister-of-antigua-and-barbuda-gaston-browne-don-t-let-the-chinese-break-laws-conserving-our-marine-protected-areas>

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Recently a Chinese development company purchased some 1600 acres of undeveloped waterfront land with the intention of creating hundreds of villas, several marinas and luxury hotels, a casino, a school, a hospital, a horse racing track and two golf courses. All of it lies within an incredibly delicate marine ecosystem which is currently protected by the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda. Among several laws which aim to conserve this national treasure is a section within the Fisheries Act dealing with Marine Protected Areas. All of the coastline within this project are within the North East Marine Management Area (NEMMA) which was designated a Marine Protected Area in 2005. Despite this, plans show vast marsh lands, mangroves, flats, reefs and nesting vegetation cleared to make way for the project. This would mean laws either being broken or changed for the developer. This can not be permitted to happen.

For thousands of years settlers have sustained themselves with the fruits of these delicate habitats. Currently fishers and tourism based stakeholders utilize the environs that revolve around the delicate mangroves and surrounding habitats. These natural resources are hugely important assets not only to them but to all hotels in Antigua and more importantly to the ecosystems of the wider Caribbean and the world. This large area was made a Marine Protected Area because of its huge importance and it is our duty to ensure that it remains intact for future generations to come. Antigua and Barbuda needs development but not at the expense of areas which we thought prudent to protect just a blink ago in time. Tourism is a relatively new industry and its fickle nature is susceptible to many threats which we have no control over. Terrorism, fuel crises, hurricanes, climate change, sea level rise, market crashes and many other factors all are not unrealistic threats. One day we may not be able to rely upon tourism to sustain our people and we must be able to look once again to the natural resources for sustenance. If we permit these critically important resources to be destroyed then we will only follow them in the future.

It is essential that we continue to protect these life giving resources. No amount of concrete and golf courses will feed us in the future. We need sustainable development and not destructive development.

It is imperative that the Prime Minister is shown that the people who care about sustainable development in Antigua and Barbuda are not a fundamentalist minority as he recently described them at the ground breaking ceremony. He has the power to ensure that this important development is done in accordance with the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda and with the health of future generations of nationals and their natural resources in mind. Tell him you care by signing this petition because you are not a fundamentalist. You are a caring visionary.