



October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001

Ms. Kathy Kirbo  
Executive Director  
Reef Ball Foundation  
6916 22nd Street West  
Bradenton, FL 34207

Re: Reef Ball Grant Funding

Dear Ms. Kirbo:

This letter is in reference to the Reefs Around the World Grant Program donated by the Reef Ball Foundation. I contacted Mr. Todd Barber concerning the possibility of starting a Reef Ball Program on Sint Maarten for the Marine Park (Nature Foundation of Sint Maarten). This project will be organized through the initiative of the Nature Foundation of Sint Maarten, in connection with the Dutch Recovery Fund.

At this time we are in the planning phase of the Reef Ball Program, and we are finalizing our budget, management plan and logistics. The Marine Park office has contacted Mr. Paul Spiertz from Portomari in Curacao to inquire on information about the project in Curacao and he suggested that we further our ideas and present them to you at this time.

The intention of this project is to provide an additional artificial habitat to restore and enhance the ecological value of Sint Maarten, while improving the SCUBA diving tourism market. By initiating this program, the local community and visitors alike will benefit by increasing public knowledge through education and awareness.

Ideally, the Reef Balls will be placed in a public area, close to the coral reefs surrounding the coastal waters of Sint Maarten. This will enhance the dive and tour market by providing additional dive sites for skin and SCUBA diving activities, while reducing the negative and stressful impact that SCUBA diving can incur on coral reefs.

A Reef Ball project can be started with the limited funding that is available from the Dutch Recovery Fund. The Dutch Recovery Fund is intended to augment the tourism market through proper advertising and promotion of the island of Sint Maarten. Within this project, there is a substantial amount allocated for eco-tourism and environmental projects, where the Reef Ball project would fall under. The proper permit requests are

to be submitted in the near future to the local government so that a legal framework exists for the placement of the Reef Balls.

The Nature Foundation of Sint Maarten will facilitate the Reef Ball project through proper management, public awareness (news and media), and education (schools and local community). In the future, public schools will be involved in the installation of the Reef Balls through our snorkeling program (Reef Ranger Program). The students will be able to get hands-on experience in the process of deployment of Reef Balls and receive information on the ecology and ecosystems on Sint Maarten.

The Reef Ball project will be monitored on a yearly basis, especially if hurricanes affect the area. Monitoring and documenting the Reef Ball project will be an integral part of the successful implementation, and current updates will be provided to the Reef Ball Foundation.

At this time, The Nature Foundation of Sint Maarten would like to inquire on the possibility of receiving a grant from the Reef Ball Foundation to enable us to proceed with this project. Please find attached in Microsoft Word file general information on the Nature Foundation of Sint Maarten for your records. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

We look forward to working with you in the future, and we hope to hear from you soon.

We thank you for your time and effort,

Warm Regards,

Andy Caballero  
Marine Park Manager  
Nature Foundation of SXM

Marjolijn Richardson  
Director  
Nature Foundation of SXM

Cc: Dick Rook, Louis Brown (VROM), Paul Hoetjes (VOMIL), Joane Dovale, Emil Lee (SHTA), Keith Graham (Great Bay Hotel), Regina Labega (St. Maarten Tourist Office), Edward Dest (St. Maarten Tourist Office), Astrid Hubbers (Holland representation), Commissioner Roy Marlin