

Nicely done article on the Vieques situation.

The negative impact on tourism is well known, but one of the points that is lost to most people is that the limitations and irregularities of the cargo ferry operation prevent new business development and inhibit all construction. No new business that requires a flow of supplies will set up here knowing that they will have NO PRIORITY on the ferry - all of the regular slots go to "friends and family." Note:

To add even more insult to our injury, there is substantial evidence that local business interests exercise a high degree of influence over who gets access to the island. In the *PR Daily Sun*, February 6, 2011 issue, our senator, Lorna Soto, is quoted as saying: "There are sectors inside Vieques that control the economy...." We are forced to deal with family monopolies in most all of our necessity purchases in Vieques:

1. Grocery stores
2. Gasoline
3. Pharmacy
4. Building materials
5. Auto inspection
6. Bank

Government supported monopolies include:

1. Electricity
2. Water
3. Telephone
4. Ferry

According to *Caribbean Business*, 62% of Puerto Rican household expenses go to food, utilities, and fuel. In Vieques, almost all of our necessary expenses are paid to monopolies of one sort or another. We experience little of a "free market" society. Competition in retail is systematically prevented through the limitation of availability of reservations and space on the cargo ferry on a consistent basis.

I've reported a number of times on the cargo ferry situation to many organizations:
<http://viequesverde.biz/commentary.htm>

Thanks so much for your attention to our plight.

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