

resources to comply with his constitutional responsibilities rather than issuing reports on ASA operations and compliance with environmental regulations. He said the Environmental Protection Agency and the Environmental Quality Board are constantly overseeing the water utility.

He said the function of the comptroller is limited to examining income and disbursements of public funds to determine their legitimacy.

The report issued exposes the findings that are out of the scope of the authority delegated to the Comptroller's Office, he added.

"This invades the jurisdiction of other regulating organisms and is not linked to an income and disbursement assessment of public funds, which constitutes a duplicity of efforts and a possible undue use of funds belonging to the people of Puerto Rico on the comptroller's part," Agosto Alicea said.

Agosto Alicea said that ASA recognizes the authority of the comptroller to intervene in all government agencies "if and only if it complies with the constitutional and legal provisions."

A Comptroller's Office spokeswoman said the office would not respond to Agosto Alicea's criticism, adding that the final report would be released publicly in 30 days.

EL VISITANTE CRITICIZES 'WHOLESALE CANDIDATES'

The weekly newspaper of the Catholic Church called Friday for better representation in the Legislature and government of Puerto Rico by members of poor and marginalized populations.

"The spectrum of candidates is fed by several types of people. There are artists,

it added.

At the same time, the publication censures those who qualify as "candidates with vague ideas that are acrobats of superficiality." It called them "wholesale candidates," in reference to the large number of candidates running for the 2004 general elections.

It calls on candidates running for election to demonstrate an authentic love and devotion to Puerto Rico.

In addition, it warns voters to be very aware of the next election process so that they do not fall into money traps or the traps of power groups.

"Time passes and Puerto Rico stands still... We need civil servants who are sincere and have a good heart to be able to get out of this mire that we live in," the publication added.

DNER CHIEF DENIES FAILING TO COMPLY WITH PLAN

Department of Natural and Environmental Resources Secretary Luis Rodríguez denied Friday that he has failed to comply with his agency's co-management plan for the San Patricio Forest, as claimed by an environmental group.

On Thursday, Committee for the San Patricio Forest spokesman Javier Almeyda sent a letter to Rodríguez complaining that the secretary had failed to live up to promises he made during a visit to the forest in March, when he promised to make the forest "a priority" and provide vehicles and personnel to help the group maintain the forest.

Rodríguez said Friday that the DNER has already purchased a pickup and said the agency will install an electric gate at the entrance, among other measures.



Lawmakers see mothers' right to

By The STAR wire services

Island lawmakers said Friday that they wanted to protect a mother's right to breastfeed her children whenever and wherever they saw fit.

Puerto Rican Independence Party Rep. Víctor García San Inocencio said a measure that he authored which guarantees a mother's right to breastfeed a child in public or private has the support of 42 lawmakers and should have not problem being passed.

Meanwhile, New Progressive Party Representative Albita Rivera presented on Friday a bill that proposes to clear up the current legislation in Puerto Rico on breastfeeding.

The legislative measure aims to reaffirm a mother's right to breastfeed a child in any public place, so this act cannot be criminalized or prohibited.

The legislator said that even though Law 168 of May 4, 1949, amended in 1999, orders certain shopping centers and airports, among other places, to

have areas for breastfeeding for the public, many of these areas.

Moreover, Rivera in although some places lack ing area, breastfeeding mo right to feed their childr where they believe it is pe

"The Legislature cannot feeding areas to become jail that restricts a mother feeding in alternate areas store," said Rivera, form director of the Women Committee.

She added that it is necessary and reaffirm a mother's an alternate place to breast

Rivera indicated that th "is silent" with respect to establishments.

The legislation will help feeding mothers aware abo to breastfeed, and if som stop them from exercising

Arrest warrant issued for witness

BY MARTY GERARD DELFIN

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Of The STAR Staff

Chief U.S. District Judge Héctor Laffitte issued an arrest warrant for a witness who reportedly has refused to testify in the death penalty trial of Héctor Oscar Acosta Martínez and Joel Rivera Alejandro.

Government prosecutors asked Laffitte at the end of Thursday's court session to issue the warrant against Brenda Maldonado Cruz, who has been "reluctant" to testify, according to court records.

Maldonado Cruz, the former girlfriend of José Pérez Mojica, was reportedly with him the night of Feb. 11, 1998 when Acosta Martínez asked the boyfriend to help guard kidnap victim Jorge Díaz Hernández.

The alleged gang of kidnapers shot and killed Díaz

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