Summary of Proceedings

Public Hearing
Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs
Held on Friday May 18, 2018

Subject matter: An Inquiry into the Waste Management policies and initiatives of the state.

Venue: A public hearing was held on Friday May 18, 2018 from 10:36 a.m. to 12:11 p.m. in the J. Hamilton Maurice Meeting Room, Mezzanine Floor, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain.

Committee Members

The following Committee Members were present:

- Ms. Sophia Chote SC (Chairman)
- Mrs. Vidia Gayadeen-Gopeesingh, MP
- Mr. Taharqa Obika
- Dr. Lester Henry

Witnesses who appeared

The following officials of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) appeared:

- Mr. Raye Sandy  Chief Administrator
- Mr. Linford Beckles  Director, Environment
- Ms. Damika Marshall  Environmental Officer II
- Mrs. Dianne Baker-Henry  Administrator
- Mr. Ricardo Bobb  Public Health Inspector III
- Ms. Jasiyah Ibrahim  Project Engineer
The following officials of the Ace Recycling Limited /Caribbean Batteries Recycling Limited appeared:

- Mr. Kevin Clarke  Director/Operations Manager
- Mrs. Tricia Clarke-DeFreitas  Director, Finance

The following officials representing the Council of Presidents of the Environment and Green Engineering appeared:

- Ms. Kelli Danglad  Technical Manager, Green Engineering
- Mr. David Jacob  Technical Manager, Green Engineering

**Key Issues Discussed**

The following are the main issues arising from discussions with the Tobago House of Assembly:

i. The relationship between THA and the Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL);

ii. The THA partnered with SWMCOL on a tyre shredding initiative;

iii. The relationship between the THA’s Division of Infrastructure, Quarries and the Environment and the Environmental Management Authority (EMA);

iv. The disposal of derelict vehicles at the Studley Park Waste Integrated Facility (SPWIF);

v. Initiatives being taken to phase out styro-foam products in Tobago;

vi. Biodegradable products are subject to taxation whereas styro-foam products are not under the present tariff structure;

vii. The need for central government to review the tariff structure to address the price differential between biodegradable products and styro-foam products;

viii. Alternatives to styro-foam products;

ix. The relationship between the SPWIF and the Studley Park Quarry which allows for the adequate covering of at least 6 inches of dirt on top of compacted waste;

x. SPWIF’s utilisation of engineered cells to allow for the proper ventilation of methane gas;

xi. Consideration of storing and monetising the methane gas which is currently not being conducted;

xii. Methane gas emissions not being measured;

xiii. Challenges faced by the THA in curbing coastal pollution;

xiv. THA’s consideration of initiatives geared towards separation of waste at households;

xv. The disposal of car batteries at the SPWIF;

xvi. Informal scavenging of car batteries;
xvii. The THA’s Divisions were free to use agricultural waste for compost provided that the waste was not contaminated; and
xviii. Roving checkers being used to ensure that scavenger companies adhere to the agreed terms and conditions;
xix. Measures taken by the THA to prevent habitation of the SPWIF;
xx. The disposal of bio-medical waste via incineration at the Scarborough General Hospital;
xxi. The initiatives being taken by the THA to raise public awareness regarding proper waste management at Primary and Secondary Schools;
xxii. Research into using carbonisation to dispose of bio-medical waste; and
xxiii. The need for a more structured approach to waste collection.

The following are the main issues highlighted during discussions with the **Ace Recycling Limited/Caribbean Batteries Recycling Limited**:

i. The company recycling approximately 14 million pounds of paper annually;
ii. Recycled paper being shipped to Latin American countries and some Asian countries with India being the main importer of recycled paper;
iii. The cost per metric ton of recycled paper ranging from $50 to $300 USD depending on the grade of paper;
iv. The proper means for the disposal of car batteries;
v. Used car batteries being bought for $25 to $80 whereas in bulk, it may cost between $4000 to $5000 per metric ton of the used car batteries;
vii. The types of batteries recycled;
ix. Funding being sourced to establish a first world recycling facility.

The following are the main issues highlighted during discussions with the **Council of Presidents of the Environment represented by Green Engineering**:

i. The role and functions of the Council of Presidents of the Environment;
ii. The lack of proper waste disposal in Trinidad;
iii. Hazardous and non-hazardous waste being disposed of at the same location in Trinidad;
iv. Lead being the main contaminant of soil in Trinidad due to the improper and informal disposal of car batteries;
v. The cost to treat contaminated land ranging from $500 per cubic yard (non-hazardous) to $5000 per cubic yard (hazardous eg. lead)
vi. A preliminary study on contaminated land completed in 2015;
vii. The process by which Green Engineering remediates contaminated land;
viii. Recommendation for a dismantling facility for end of life vehicles to provide a formal and controlled process for disposing of derelict vehicles;
ix. Proposal for a centralised waste management facility;
x. The manner in which waste is managed in the paint industry;
xi. The means by which infectious bio-medical waste should be disposed; and
xii. The need for institutional strengthening, upgrading of facilities and proper legislation/regulations to allow for adequate waste management.

This public hearing can be viewed on demand via our YouTube Channel.
https://youtu.be/slebmePHJlw

Contact the Committee’s Secretary
jscfla@ttparliament.org or 624-7275 Ext. 2282/2277/2284

Committees Unit

May 21, 2018.