



Ministry of Planning and Development
Office of the Permanent Secretary

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March 14th, 2018

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House
Levels G-9, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
Port of Spain

Dear Mrs. Sampson-Meiguel,

Fourteenth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the Financial Year 2016 with Specific Reference to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries

Reference is made to your letter Parl.: 5/2/98 dated January 25, 2018 on the above subject.

Attached is the response of the Ministry of Planning and Development with respect to the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee.

Yours Respectfully,


Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Planning and Development

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Response to Recommendations

Recommendation:

- **The Environmental Management Authority in collaboration with the MEEI ensure that all quarry operators possess a Certificate of Environmental Clearance and submit a status of this initiative by February 28, 2018.**

Response to Recommendation:

The Environmental Management Authority (EMA) has collaborated with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI) on the operational status of quarries based on the information provided by the MEEI. In this regard, the EMA is pleased to report on the status of such quarries according to the Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) process:

- Forty-one (41) quarries have been issued CECs for the life of the quarries.
- Twenty-seven (27) applications are waiting further information from the applicants on general and environmental type data in order to advance the application process. These application files remain open as the EMA is still awaiting information to be provided by the applicants based on requests for further information.
- Eleven quarries which had applied did not require CECs. These can be categorized into three main groups:
 - 1) activity predated the Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) Rules of 2001;
 - 2) previous CEC issued remains valid for the same project scope and location, as such no new CEC is required; and
 - 3) amendments were made to the CEC designated activity order in 2007, which required that only quarries greater than 150 acres would require CEC.
- Four (4) CEC applications have been withdrawn at the request of the applicant.
- One (1) Notice of Refusal (NOR) was issued to an applicant. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was required. During the review of the EIA numerous deficiencies were identified and communicated to the applicant through Review and Assessment Reports (RAR) for which no agreement/way forward was reached in resolving issues. As such, the determination of the EMA is to issue a NOR.

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Response to Recommendations

Endorsement:

- **The Committee endorses the steps being made by the MEEI to help alleviate the backlogs of RLE tests at CARIRI and should submit a report to the Parliament by February 28, 2018.**

Response to Endorsement:

The conduct of Royalty Lease Evaluation (RLE) tests involves heating of crude oil samples collected from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI). The explosive nature of crude oil when exposed to heat presents an inherent risk. This was manifested in September 2013 when during the process of conducting an RLE, an explosion and subsequent fire occurred in the laboratory. This resulted in injury to staff members, destruction of equipment and partial damage to the laboratory. The Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) was unable to conduct RLE testing for a period of approximately two (2) years, which caused a backlog of sample testing.

The laboratory was refurbished and new RLE Distillation Apparatus installed and commissioned in late 2015. The new equipment is semi-automated and contains additional safety features that significantly reduces the risks associated with the previous manual equipment. CARIRI was able to resume RLE testing in late 2015.

In an effort to address the backlog of samples, in January 2016, three (3) technicians were specifically assigned to work on RLE testing. There is currently no staffing issues related to RLE testing and staffing is not a limiting factor.

The following RLE Samples are collected by CARIRI:

- Trinmar Soldado (collected at Petrotrin Santa Flora)
- Trintomar Enron (collect at Petrotrin Pointe-a-Pierre)

The remaining RLE samples are delivered to CARIRI under instruction of the MEEI. The following samples are currently delivered to CARIRI:

- Primera Roodal
- Primera San Francique
- Primera Fyzabad
- Primera Palo Seco

The samples are stored under a controlled environment upon arrival at CARIRI. A designated RLE sample storage area is currently maintained which is cooled and to which access is controlled.

With respect to the backlog of RLE tests at CARIRI, all samples from Pointe-a-Pierre were collected as at December 2017 and testing is expected to be completed on or before June 2018. Samples from Santa Flora for 2013 to 2014 were collected in January 2018 while samples for 2015 to 2016 will be collected in June 2018. By the end of 2018, it is expected that all samples from Santa Flora will be up to date. With respect to Primera, all samples are currently up to date.

It must be noted that the RLE test is not an international standard test and is not certified by any international bodies, it is a test method developed for the analysis of local crude oils since circa 1938. The test method has been run at CARIRI since the 1970s at the request of the MEEI. The RLE 1 Test Method is conducted in accordance with the requirements of CARIRI's ISO 9001 certification.

CARIRI will be extending an invitation to officials from the MEEI to view the refurbished laboratory and updated equipment and will continue to liaise with MEEI representatives, providing periodic reports on the status of the RLE.