



GRENADA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FOURTH SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WEDNESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER, 2025

*Sitting of the House of Representatives
held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's
on Wednesday 19th November, 2025*

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Attendance

PRESENT

	Mr. Speaker Honourable Leo Cato, MP <i>in the Chair</i>
Honourable Dickon Mitchell, MP (<i>St. David</i>)	- Prime Minister & Minister for National Security, Home Affairs, Information, Disaster Management & Public Administration, Infrastructure and Physical Development, Public Utilities & Civil Aviation, and Transportation, and Information and Communications Technology
Honourable Philip A. Telesford, MP (<i>St. George South East</i>)	- Minister for Health
Honourable Joseph Andall, MP (<i>St. Patrick West</i>)	- Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade & Export Development
Honourable Lennox John Andrews, MP (<i>St. Andrew South West</i>)	- Minister for Economic Development, Planning and Co-operatives, Agriculture & Lands, Forestry and Marine Resources
Honourable Tevin Andrews, MP (<i>Carriacou & Petite Martinique</i>)	- Ministry of Carriacou, Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government
Honourable Dennis Cornwall, MP (<i>St. Patrick East</i>)	- Minister for Finance
Honourable Kerryne Z. James, MP (<i>St. John</i>)	- Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy
Honourable Ron Livingston Redhead, MP (<i>St. George North East</i>)	- Member
Honourable Delma Thomas, MP (<i>St. Andrew North West</i>)	- Minister for Mental Health, Wellness, and Religious Affairs, with a special focus on the Mt. Gay Psychiatric Hospital
Honourable Andy Williams, MP (<i>St. George South</i>)	- Minister for Mobilisation, Implementation and Transformation
Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith C. Mitchell, PC, MP, JP (<i>St. George North West</i>)	- Member
Honourable. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, MP (<i>St. Mark</i>)	- Deputy Speaker
Honourable Kate Lewis-Peters, MP (<i>St. Andrew North East</i>)	- Member
Honourable Peter David, MP (<i>Town of St. George</i>)	- Member

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Attendance

ABSENT

Honourable Emmalin Pierre, MP
(*St. Andrew South East*)

- Leader of His Majesty's Opposition
(*Excuse tendered*)

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**Prayers
Minutes**

The Sitting of the House of Representatives began at 9:05 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: Let's pray.

(House Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Join me as we say the Lord's Prayer together.

(The Lord's Prayer was said)

Mr. Speaker: Pray be seated. Honourable Members, this Parliament now convenes.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 3 – Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a new Member.

Item 4 – Confirmation of Minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the House of Representatives held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday the 28th of October 2025, and on the 4th of November 2025, at 9:00 a.m., be taken as read. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes taken as read.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

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*Minutes
Announcements
Papers and Reports*

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of a Sitting of the House of Representatives held at Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's, on Tuesday the 28th of October 2025, and on the 4th of November 2025, at 9:00 a.m., be confirmed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Minutes confirmed.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 5 – Messages from the Governor-General.
Item 6 – Announcements by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I have been advised that the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition, the Honourable Emmalin Pierre, will not be joining us today. She travelled overseas.

I also want to inform this Honourable House that the Clerk of Parliament is now on a brief vacation, and so we have an Acting Clerk this morning in the person of Mr. Adrian Joseph.

And finally, following the Sitting of Parliament today, we hope to hand over the keys to the vehicles that would be assigned to the various Parliamentary Offices. Those are my announcements.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 7 – Presentation of Petition.
Item 8 – Presentation of Papers and Reports from Select
Committees.

Mr. Speaker: Wait, the Minister's light is on. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In respect of item number eight, I wish to present the following Papers and Reports.

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***Papers and Reports
Personal Explanations***

- Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of Privileges, held on Wednesday, the 12th of November 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Chamber of the Houses of Parliament; and
 - Minutes of the proceedings of the House Committee, held on the 17th of November 2025, at 11:00 a.m. at the Chamber of the Houses of Parliament.
- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Leader of Government's Business. The aforementioned Papers are now laid in Parliament.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 9 – Unopposed Private Business.
Item 10 – Questions.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed. Proceed.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 11 – Urgent Questions under the provisions of
Standing Order No. 20 (1) (Notice of
Questions).
Item 12 – Statements by Ministers.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. Speaker: MP for St. George North-West.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I stand to make two short statements here this morning. I recall when we first started this entire Parliamentary Session after the June 22nd General Elections, the first time we met, it was a group

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Personal Explanations

of elected Parliamentarians. I did advise Members, based on my experience over forty years in this House, it is important that Members from either side Government or Opposition, at least a Member be appointed to deal with the question of Parliamentary Sessions, which is so fundamental because this House is composed of two critical parts, the Government and Opposition and one without the other is not ideal.

So there was some debate because I don't think that some Members understood the point I was making, but every day I see things that convince me why it was necessary. In all my years in this House, I've never seen a situation where you just call and say that a Parliamentary Session is being held, and you get notice. So I question, always, the Member from "Our Side" and said, "Look, what is this called"?

The Government Members, Ministers, are permanently employed people, and they have a responsibility to their jobs as full-time officers of the state. The Members on "This Side", the Opposition, do not have that. They have to analyse... Although some people say I gave them this and I gave them that... Nobody gave me anything. I never ask anybody for anything.

So that decision is critical because we have a life outside of this House. Today, what do we have? The Leader of the Opposition is not here. Do you believe that if she knew, as a responsible Member of this House, that a session was going to be planned and the consultative process that I advise was done, that she would be out on an important day like this? I doubt it, although I did not ask it specifically, but I doubt it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to use your good office to see to it because it is having a fundamental problem. I've missed some sessions, and I've not even called, and I won't because the disrespect to Members of the House, particularly the Opposition, is so fundamentally flawed. It does not make sense that we are creating issues that we should not. It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker, if you are doing this. A simple consultative process...

In fact, the staff at my office, my constituency, told me they got some documents at 4:30 yesterday afternoon. What am I to do with documents that come in at 4:30 p.m.? Documents are coming at any time. **(Laughter)**

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to use your good office because you are supposed to

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***Personal Explanations
Motions***

be the umpire in this House, and each side deserves respect, and that is so fundamental going forward.

The second point I want to raise is... I never ask anybody for a vehicle for North-West, St. George. I was not party to any discussion on vehicles. I believe that it is the abuse of our roles and responsibilities in this critical time, when there is so much pain and suffering outside. This Member of this House will not accept any vehicle, not today, tomorrow or whenever. In fact, I don't have a long time left in this House, so it can't be next year or two years from now, but it will not be accepted.

That money that's being used to buy vehicles that are not necessary, in my view, could be used for the people of North-West who are facing consequences that they would like solved. Sell it and make the money available for the North-West constituency, not me, for the people of North-West to be able in these hard, gru-gru times. So, Mr. Speaker, I am speaking from the heart, not the NDC heart; the real heart.

I will not accept and don't want... **(Laughter)** Whether North-West St. George or... I don't know how these vehicles or what writings are on them, but if they have North-West on it, please say, "North-West Representative..." which I am still here as having received 80% of the vote up to last election... "Will not accept any vehicle from the taxpayers of this country." What do we have? What we are doing with it? The people are suffering, let them have the benefits of that money.

We have already received 100% concessions. We are not here as Parliamentarians to treat ourselves nice and to say how much times we have treated Parliamentarians better than any other. Forget that. Parliamentarians know when they accepted responsibility to be here... They beg for the job. We beg for it, so we are not here to just butter ourselves, Mr. Speaker. So I'm saying openly here, count me out. Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, MP for St. George North-West. Proceed

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 14 – Motions.

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Motions

Bills: Fisheries (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to propose the following Motion.

WHEREAS debate on the Gracious Address delivered by the Governor-General on your occasion of the Ceremonial State opening of the Forth Session of the Eleventh Parliament on Friday the 12th of September 2025, was deferred to a date to be named;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the said Address be further deferred to a date to be named.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable, just come to the bench.

(Leader of Government's Business—Honourable Philip Telesford approached the Speaker's Table)

(Leader of Government's Business—Honourable Philip Telesford returned to his seat)

Mr. Speaker: Sorry about that Honourable Members, I couldn't find my copy of the Resolution.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion approved.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 15 – Bills.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to

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introduce for its first reading a Bill for an Act, shortly entitled, Fisheries (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Clerk (Ag.): A Bill which seeks to amend the Fisheries Act CAP. 108 (the “principal Act”) to enhance the regulation of the treatment of marine mammals within the waters of the State of Grenada.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government’s Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the House be suspended to enable the Bill to go through all its stages at this Sitting. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government’s Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government’s Business. Leader of Government’s Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fisheries (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Mr. Speaker, over the years, Grenada’s Fisheries Sector has evolved from essentially small-scale to large-scale fishing targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the ocean. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding this, there is an imminent ban against Grenada exporting fish and fish products to the United States of America, if action is not taken soon enough, including the passage of this Bill.

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Mr. Speaker, on the 2nd of September 2025, according to a notification published on the website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Grenada was denied a comparability finding and a prohibition against the importation of fish and fish products originating from Grenada into the United States of America. This, Mr. Speaker, is proposed to take effect on the 1st of January 2026.

Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that this decision was taken because Grenada had not demonstrated seriousness in reporting and dealing with recommendations over the years to consistently report information to NOAA and to apply the recommendations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of the United States of America.

Who is NOAA? Mr. Speaker, NOAA stands for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a US Federal Government Agency within the Department of Commerce. Its mission, Mr. Speaker, is to understand and predict changes in the earth's climate, weather patterns, ocean movements and coast and to conserve and manage coastal and marine resources. NOAA, Mr. Speaker, is the source of weather forecasts, storm warnings, climate monitoring and managing fisheries and marine ecosystems within a 200-mile radius of the US coast, and it operates under six line offices, including the following –

- The National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Services;
- National Marine Fisheries Service;
- National Oceans Service;
- National Weather Service;
- Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; and
- The Office of Marine and Aviation Operations.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the Department of Commerce, NOAA is responsible for the stewardship of national marine resources like fish, marine mammals, and other species. It conducts research, Mr. Speaker, to support sustainable fisheries, protect marine life, and conserve habitats. NOAA employs approximately 11,000 staff within the United States, including scientists, policymakers, enforcers and so on, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, there are several species of marine mammals. Over 130 different species, Mr. Speaker, including whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, wal-ruses, man-a-tees, dugongs, sea otter and polar bears.

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Mr. Speaker, these animals are divided mainly into five main groups based on taxonomy and reliance on a marine environment. These include:

- Cetacean – whales, dolphins and porpoises;
- Si-ren-ians – mantis and dugongs;
- Pinnipeds – seals, sea lions and wal-ruses;
- Mustelids – sea otters; and
- Ur-si-dae – polar bears.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn my attention to the Grenada Fisheries Sector and it's important to our local economy. Grenada, Mr. Speaker, has seen its fisheries sector over the years evolve from small to large-scale commercial-type fishing. Mr. Speaker, fish like tuna, tuna-like species, account for some 70% of the reported takings by our fishermen in the year 2023. Mr. Speaker, fishing contributes significantly to the performance of a national economy.

Within the agriculture sector, Mr. Speaker, it accounts for some 46 or 31%, Mr. Speaker, of the agriculture sector, fishing alone, and to the National GDP some 1.5%. It's also, Mr. Speaker, a significant contributor towards reducing unemployment, and according to an FOA Report of 2023, it accounted for some 3,500 diving jobs. 86% of them, Mr. Speaker, are in full-time employment. However, the fisheries sector accounts for approximately 6,000 jobs when combining direct and indirect jobs. So, Mr. Speaker, you can see the relevance of the fishing sector to Grenada's economy.

Mr. Speaker, our fishermen have made significant investments, and so, Mr. Speaker, the total capacity of fishing fleets, as per a 2024 report, was some 990 fishing boats. 90% of them are motorised fishing boats. And, Mr. Speaker, it is reported that fishing is one of the fastest-growing sectors in terms of performance. So what's the importance to us?

Mr. Speaker, fishing makes a major contribution towards our economy, towards our food and nutrition security and sovereignty. It also contributes, Mr. Speaker, to poverty alleviation and to the national income. It contributes to employment generation and the provision of sustainable livelihoods, and of course, Mr. Speaker, it's a significant exchange earner for us. Mr. Speaker, therefore, it is highly imperative that we develop strong legislation that will protect the fishing industry and, at the same time, align ourselves with regional and international partners.

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Mr. Speaker, in order to support this call for alignment, we must keep in mind the economic benefit of the fishing industry, so it cannot be done in isolation. Our annual average fish production over the past 10 years, Mr. Speaker, accounted for some 5.5 million pounds of fish, valued at EC\$50 million. During that same period, Mr. Speaker, the annual average of exports was 2.5 million pounds valued at EC\$35 million. So that's how important it is to our sector and to the national economy. Mr. Speaker, our fishermen and the Government alike have made significant investments in the sector, amounting to a sum of EC\$500 million.

So, we cannot, Mr. Speaker, we cannot just do nothing; it is important that we act, act quickly, and act wisely. So, Mr. Speaker, we can sit on our hands, we can pretend that the notice was not served, we can pretend that we have other engagements, and not show up to the Parliament of Grenada, and for some, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that they're being paid to sit in the Parliament, that's ordinary, that's okay.

While we do that, Mr. Speaker, our marine mammals are still endangered, and so strong legislation, Mr. Speaker, is imperative. It's imperative that we implement strong legislation to protect marine mammals. We have a number of endangered species, including the blue whale, the bowhead whale, the fin whale, the north-atlantic right whale, the sea whale, as well... and all of these species, as I speak, Mr. Speaker, all of these whales are endangered, and so they have to be protected. Dolphins, too, Mr. Speaker, are also endangered, and so many of our sea creatures.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are several threats to the survival of marine mammals, several threats to these marine mammals. They include bycatch, habitat destruction, pollution, the effects of climate change itself, ship strikes, and historical exploitation. Mr. Speaker, through bycatch, marine mammals can get accidentally caught and drown while fishing.

Global bycatch, Mr. Speaker, is estimated to be a sum of 650,000 whales, dolphins, seals, and other marine mammals caught and killed, Mr. Speaker, accidentally by bycatch. Mr. Speaker, bycatch is the greatest direct cause of marine mammal injuries and death from human activities. Habitat destruction. Mr. Speaker, the loss and degradation of marine habitats threatens marine mammals' ability to feed and breathe, to find food and breathe themselves, and to multiply in the ocean.

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It is important, Mr. Speaker, to speak about these things because a lot of these things happen because of us humans. As I speak, there is a book called “Animal Farm,” where the animals **(laughter)**, you know, Mr. Speaker, recognised the destruction by humans **(laughter)** and so decided to retaliate, but, Mr. Speaker, **(laughter)** you might be smiling at this. But pollution, Mr. Speaker, I ask, and if we do not educate ourselves and educate the population, Mr. Speaker, and pass legislation to ensure that we protect the environment, sooner or later, Mr. Speaker, we will not be able to feed ourselves. Where does food come from? Either in the ocean or on the earth by way of planting, animals and plants, and so, Mr. Speaker, we have to protect.

Climate change, Mr. Speaker, is another one, the warming of the ocean’s temperatures and the melting of the Arctic Ice, that, too, Mr. Speaker, significantly impacts the sustainability of Marine Mammals. Ship strikes, multiple ships moving across the ocean, and marine mammals coming into contact with them can result in death. And, of course, Mr. Speaker, overhunting, if you might call it that, or overfishing, that too. So, Mr. Speaker, I say all of this to say, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is important. We have to do what we have to do.

This Bill seeks to amend the Fisheries Act, CAP. 108, which is the principal Act, Mr. Speaker, to regulate the treatment of marine mammals within the waters of Grenada. The Bill, Mr. Speaker, contains four clauses. Clause 1, Mr. Speaker, provides for the short title. Clause 2 provides for the amendment of section 2 of the principal Act, which treats with the insertion of new definitions for the “observer” and “marine mammal”.

Clause 3, Mr. Speaker, provides for the insertion of a new section, section 28A, of the principal Act, to establish the observer and monitoring system to improve the administration of the principal Act.

Clause 2, Mr. Speaker, seeks to amend section 2 of the principal Act as follows—

- (a) in the definition, Mr. Speaker, of “fish” by inserting after the word “eggs”, a “Comma”, and the words, “and marine mammals”.

This, Mr. Speaker, is to embrace Marine Mammals in the definition of fish; so, the passage of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, will include Marine Mammals as fish. Mr. Speaker, secondly—

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(b) by inserting the appropriate alphabetic sequence, the following new definitions—

Observer, Mr. Speaker, means the following... The two definitions, as I mentioned earlier, are the observer and marine mammals. “Observer”, Mr. Speaker, is a person authorised to record monitoring, to record the surveillance information on marine mammals, and to record, authorised, Mr. Speaker, to record fishing operations, and to also record Marine Mammal life history information and other scientific data. The observer, Mr. Speaker, is also authorised to collect biological specimens during fishing activities, and he or she is authorised to discharge any other functions as prescribed by the Chief Fisheries Officer.

Marine mammals, Mr. Speaker, means any mammal that is methodologically adapted to the marine environment, including whales, dolphins, and so on, and so on, those that I mentioned earlier.

Clause 3, Mr. Speaker, is where we seek to introduce a new section, section 28A, to the principal Act. So, it is amended by inserting after 28, the following new section—

“Observer and monitoring programme

28A. (1) The Chief Fisheries Officer, Mr. Speaker, shall establish, plan and manage an observer and monitoring programme for the purpose of collecting and reporting reliable and accurate information for scientific, management and compliance purposes under the Act.

(2) Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of this section, an observer shall exercise scientific monitoring and other relevant functions that may be on a fishing vessel or facility related to fisheries that have been granted a licence, permit or authorisation under the Act.

(3) A person who desires to be certified as an observer may apply in writing to the Chief Fisheries Officer.

(4) Upon the recommendation of the Chief Fisheries Officer, the Minister may appoint such a person.

(5) For the avoidance of doubt, Mr. Speaker, the Chief Fisheries Officer may utilise electronic monitoring systems instead of a person or observer.

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(6) The Minister, Mr. Speaker, may make regulations to give effect to this particular Section”.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, clause 4. Clause 4, Mr. Speaker, provides for the amendment of section 40 of the principal Act to expressly empower the Minister to make regulations relating to marine mammals. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the amendment inserts a new section 4, to empower the Minister to create offences under this Act. However, Mr. Speaker, there's a ceiling. The penalties prescribed by any regulation cannot exceed EC\$100,000 or 12 months in prison.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is the construct of the Bill, and so, it is my honour to present this to the House and to ask Members to support this very important amendment to the Fisheries Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Leader of Government's Business. The MP for St. George North-West.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Experience...

Mr. Speaker: MP for St. George North-West, the floor is yours.

Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, despite the long and unnecessary **(laughter)** presentation of historical information that all of us are aware of, and I think the country is aware of could've been a turn off, but the basic thing is we have a Bill here today which deals with a fundamental issue that we all clearly on "This Side" of the House, I assume that all Members are in support because clearly those who have lived in areas where the fishing industry served almost everyone, like myself; the Beausejour, Happy Hill, Molinere, Grand Mal, and the Fontenoy area; fishing is what took care of all of us.

My grandmother, who was a main vendor at the Fish Market for over 70 years, since she was about 20, died at 98. She was able to give me the little... those little shillings when I was going to Presentation College. I used to... I had to pass there to collect that to buy bread and saltfish to survive in St. George's. So, I understand,

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having grown up in Brizan, Beausejour, and so on, the importance of the Fishing Industry for the livelihood of the people of this country.

Over the years, we have seen how it has transformed to a higher level, with many of the younger men being involved in fishing, deep fishing, and other aspects of the Fishing Industry. But the fact is, given what we understand is the case, and the possibility of fish export from Grenada being banned in our important market. We cannot play politics with this; this is not about politics, it's about the livelihood of the people of this country, so clearly, I can only assume that all Members of this House will support both sides, and therefore, I'm standing here to do this.

I had other appointments this morning, Mr. Speaker, but I only came to deal with this because I thought it was important for me to be present, but I still want you to be aware of the significant statement I made under personal speaking, whether people agree with it or not, but this is how I feel, and, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say I support this Bill going forward. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. George North-West, and now we invite the MP for the Town of St. George to take the floor.

Hon. Peter David: Thank you. **(Laughter)** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see my friend the fisherman in the House responsible for fishing, but, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you because I do have...

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member for North-West about expressing support for this Bill. I don't think any of us here would, in any way, argue that this should not be done in the interest of our country and our fishers, but they are a couple of things that I think we need to highlight, if I may; one is our vulnerability to what is done in the places where our major markets are. So, for example, while this is protecting marine life, it's rarely spurred on that it was happening in North America, and the insistence on North America for... that we do this in order to access their market.

I have no difficulty with it, I'm just saying it should highlight to us the importance of ensuring that there's that synergy support, there's that awareness of how the market can be volatile sometimes and the trends in the Market so that we'll adjust our productivity... our production, sorry, in fisheries or in agriculture to suit what the market

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wants or else we will find ourselves, and sometimes without notice losing markets for some of the products you have. So, I want us to highlight that.

In addition to that, it seems to me that this is going to lead to, based on what the Member said, it is going to lead to some need to improve technology; I think he mentioned that in the last couple of phrases, and for that, our fisherfolks would need support. Access to capital, and either access to capital personally or through Government assistance, because this is technology that I'm sure could be quite expensive. I'm not sure, the experts will say that, but we need to ensure that our fisherfolks are not disadvantaged by the need to upgrade what they're doing; they're asking... reading the... and I want to commend the Member who presented for the charts that were put up because there's extensive information there to indicate to our population, to our people the importance of fisheries.

I always say that our Blue Economy is much larger than the land space that we have. If we look at our delimitation lines and all of that, that is an area that we should expand on, that is an area that we should do more in, and I want to say that the information put up there with all of the statistics on the... particularly on the Grenada's Fisheries Sector, and this contribution is very significant, and I hope that that could be... the Minister, I guess would speak more about that, but that could be made widespread so that our people understands the importance of that sector for economy.

Sometimes, you take it for granted because it's just some fishermen out there doing fishing, we buy some fish. We don't understand how important it is to give the support necessary, and I think one of the biggest challenges we have with businesses is two things, and I want to make this a general point. There's too much bureaucracy in getting business done. Grenada is ranked very low, and I know that has been for years, so I don't want to be cradling back and forth. Simply said, we need to make it easier for businessmen and businesswomen to establish businesses, but also, we need to make it easier to access capital.

The easiest thing to do in Grenada is to get money to buy a bus or a car. It is much more difficult to get money to establish a business. Of course, the banks are risk-averse, and I understand they're here to mitigate risk, but there are ways in which we can ensure that the risks are minimised and allow access to capital. This is not a criticism, it is merely an observation from what I'm hearing, and fisherfolk fall into that

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bracket to ensure that they get more access to capital, particularly in the context here now, that there will be an increase in expenditure on their part to ensure that they do what is necessary to access the markets for their products.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this morning's exercise is good, not only in the context of getting this done. I do hope that we get it done in time. I'm not sure why it came up at such a last-minute. I'm sure the Minister for Fisheries will explain that, but I do hope that whatever needs to be done, between now and the time when they're threatening this cut-off, that it is done. I think both sides of this House, all sides, not both sides, are there are three sides now, I think, three entities now, I think... **(Laughter)** I don't know if Mr. Speaker will enlighten me on that, but all of us in here come together and make it happen collectively. There are no fishermen here and fisherwomen there; there are all of us trying to ensure the success of the Industry, and I do express my full support for this Bill, Mr. Speaker. I thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for the Town of St. George, and I see the light of the MP for St. Andrew South-West. Please take the floor.

Hon. Lennox Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a very pleasant good morning all. Mr. Speaker, I stand to give my full, full support to this Bill, and in so doing, I first wish to commend the Leader of Government's Business for presenting this Bill with such intelligence in demonstrating the importance of the Fisheries Industry to our economy, and to income, employment, output and foreign exchange earnings to our country. It has been so eloquently done, Mr. Speaker, maybe I should not spend more time to repeat, but as the Representative for the Town of St. George indicated, we can make those details available throughout Grenada, so that the population would become even more aware of the importance of the Fishing Industry to our economy, to our country, and of course, to our people.

Mr. Speaker, in supporting this Bill, I would like to focus on what we as a Government, through the Ministry of the Blue Economy, what we've been doing to avert the likelihood of that decision being implemented come January 1, 2026, what we as a Government... what we have been doing.

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Mr. Speaker, as soon as we got the message, the official message, I think it was sometime on the 26th of August 2025, the Ministry moved quickly to put together a 15-point action plan agenda to avert the likelihood of the measure being implemented, 15-point action, and in that 15-point agenda, the first thing that we did was to establish a task force. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that that 15-point agenda was discussed with the Cabinet. The Cabinet approved it, and we therefore went to work with alacrity, immediately.

In that 15-point agenda, Mr. Speaker, we created a task force with specific duties to be fulfilled by November 21, this year. The task force comprised staff from, of course, the Blue Economy, Foreign Affairs, and Legal Affairs. We also incorporated a local fisherman as well in that task force, and we incorporated local academics who are familiar with the issues, like Dr. Stephen Fletcher and Mr. Vincent Roberts. Good? ... And we went straight into the implementation of the task force.

Activities involved meeting with the Chief, the Head of the Embassy in Barbados, she came down to meet with us, together with the principal officer here and they indicated their support to us by trying to make contact and work with NOAA, for us to avert the likelihood of this happening, and the task force, Mr. Speaker, actually focus on three main events that are in keeping with the letter we got from NOAA, indicating the areas that we should really focus on if we are to avert that decision taken.

So, the task force went on, one, we had to update our Fisheries Act, our fisheries legislation. The present fisheries legislation, Mr. Chair... Mr. Speaker, sir, is old, 1986. It makes no reference to sea mammals; that's the first thing that we have to do, and we work, not just with our local people, but you also get assistance from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), and we recruited a local Grenadian based in London, Ms. Dawn De Coteau, to assist us as well with the Act and with the regulations, which is another aspect that we have to look at. Good? A number of meetings, of course, were held to discuss this.

So, the fact that we are here today is the result of work that the task force would have done, the team of the task force would've done, to get the legislation ready so it could come to the Parliament for approval.

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The second focus of the task force was the regulations. The regulations have to accompany and be a part of the Fisheries Act, and the regulations went to the Cabinet, and the Cabinet approved them, so we have two things already fulfilled. Once this Bill is passed today, we will have accomplished two aspects.

The third thing that the task force worked on was the implementation, and they made reference to it, Member for Town the city of St. George, the implementation of a Digital Vessel Monitoring System on all of our commercial vessels, and in that regard, Mr. Speaker, to complement these legislative agendas, we are working with Complete Caribbean and the Inter-American Development Bank to support that digital monitoring and tractability, that will allow us to introduce digital vessel monitoring on our commercial vessels and also with the Coast Guard as well. And of course, it will also help us with building a proper fisheries data platform.

So where are we, Mr. Speaker? We are in a position where we can now, or we would have met if I may say all of the conditions that NOAA would have pointed out to us to avert.

And in the letter that NOAA sent to us... Let me just say. NOAA reported to us, and I want to read it. In the correspondence dated 26th August 2025, NOAA stated, "In the event that Grenada has new information relevant to the denial of Grenada's comparability findings, Grenada may submit such information for NOAA's fisheries reconsideration and, where appropriate, reversal of this determination after January 1, 2026".

So all of the work of the task force was really and truly geared towards fulfilling that major objective. And therefore, where we are, Mr. Speaker, sir, is that now we are in a position to do just that; to submit the additional information for NOAA's fisheries reconsideration and reversal of this determination by January 1, 2021. Our intention, Mr. Speaker, is to have that done in our work plan. The work plan states that we are going to have that final recommendation done by November 21 this year. **(Applause)** So we're on time. So the passing of this Bill today, Mr. Speaker, is extremely paramount in our effort to avert that decision coming into place early in the New Year.

So, Mr. Speaker, obviously, you can see that the Ministry has done its work; we would have done our work. Good. We are at the point where there is a livelihood that

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the decision can be averted. We know over the last few months, Mr. Speaker, America was shut down, and that was one of the problems we were having, to make direct contact with NOAA, America was shut down. I understand now America is open for business, and that we are working with our Ambassador in Washington, Tarlie Francis, to have that direct contact with NOAA so we cannot just present in writing, but present physically in person with NOAA. All of this additional information that we have to avert the likelihood of that decision taking place. And so, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely happy to hear that in this House, this is a matter that the whole House considers of national importance, and the whole House is here to give full support to this Bill. So, Mr. Speaker, with these few words, I want to thank you very much.

But I want to repeat, Mr. Speaker, I have to say much thanks to the task force because they worked without rest. **(Applause)** They worked diligently. I myself attended some of the meetings and some of the discussions, and so I have to give a lot of thanks to the task force. I have to call their names too.

So you have Mr. Renee, the Permanent Secretary, Javon Williams and his staff in the Fisheries Division of the Blue Economy. Dr. Stephen Fletcher, Mr. Vincent Roberts, Ms. Dawn De Coteau, a young lady, Grenadian, I think she is based in London. She helped us with the regulation. She drafted most of the regulations, and we discussed them with her, a very bright lady. I think she is still in Grenada. Good?

The staff at ¹FAO. They came down. They worked with us online on the drafting of the regulation. The staff at Legal Affairs. We had Miss... Ms. Baker is here. They, too, worked diligently, Mr. Speaker. I mean, I am so proud of our people that when it comes to the issues of our country, when it comes to affecting Grenada as a people, we join our time, our talent together and produce what is required to avert the implementation of something that has negative implications for our economy. **(Applause)** And so, Mr. Speaker, with these few words, I offer my full support to this Bill, and thanks again to the team that worked together. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for St. Andrew South-West, and I think it's the MP for St. John. Honourable, please, take the floor.

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Hon. Kerryne James: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to all of the Honourable Members of this House. Mr. Speaker, as Parliamentary Representative for the constituency that carries the soul of the nation's fishing heritage, St. John, the fishing capital of Grenada. I know that my colleague from Carriacou and Petite Martinique might defer, and also my colleague through you, Mr. Speaker, on the "Other Side" of the House, St. Mark might differ. But we are the fishing capital of Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support because where I come from, fishing is not an occupation; fishing is an identity. It is the pulse of Gouyave and St. John, and so for generations in Gouyave and across the parish, the day has started long before dawn. Most of our residents and our constituents would see long-liners slipping out quietly, ice trucks and vans lining up the premises of fish markets, vendors, and shopkeepers. In other words, Mr. Speaker, an entire local economy organised around one simple fact, that fish must land, it must be handled, it must be sold, and it must be exported for families to eat and children to go to school. So this mere fact, Mr. Speaker, is indeed a bread-and-butter issue for my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, for decades, we have seen export companies like Northern Seafood carry this parish and carry this industry in terms of exporting, providing livelihoods for hundreds of families across St. John and the wider west and by extension the entire country of Grenada. Today, we have other companies and other exporters, such as the GNEXTT, those that are located in the south, that have stepped up to the plate, Mr. Speaker, to keep that economic chain alive.

And so, Mr. Speaker, between the exporters, the vendors, the processors, ice makers, even the mechanics and small businesses, fishing is not an industry in St. John, but it is an entire ecosystem.

So when we speak about a ban on fish and fish products entering the United States market from Grenada effective January 1, 2026, Mr. Speaker, we are not speaking about an abstract trade measure. We are speaking about the possible unravelling of the economic heartbeat of Gouyave and of many coastal communities on the west coast and across this country. And so I am happy, and I wish the Honourable Member of this House, through you, Mr. Speaker, who spoke about the importance of that sector, were here. Having done our due diligence and having done

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justice to those risk takers, as the Member for the Town of St. George so eloquently stated, Mr. Speaker, we would not have been here today.

This issue, Mr. Speaker, has been on the books for over a decade. That means, Mr. Speaker, we had 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, maybe we could say pandemic, 2021, 2022, even on “Our Side” too, Mr. Speaker, '23, '24, and now we're in '25.

So, Mr. Speaker, this issue is one that is really near and dear to me. The United States, Mr. Speaker, has been in many respects our main export destination for yellowfin tuna and other species, as you've heard the Leader of Government's Business explored and went through the long listing of those species, earning millions of dollars in foreign exchange for Grenada every year. Analysts have already warned us, Mr. Speaker, that a ban of this nature could indeed lead to the collapse of a sector or, at the very least, inflict serious, possibly irreparable damage if we do not respond decisively and intelligently.

And so against this backdrop, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is perhaps, in my humblest opinion, the single most critical piece of legislation to cross the floor of this House this year. It is a necessary and decisive response to a profound threat, the imminent loss of crucial export markets, a threat rooted firmly in the neglect and the failure of successive administrations over the past decade to prioritise the Marine and the Blue Economy and overall marine governance.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill about conservation. It is about compliance and most importantly, climate resilience for our cherished Blue Economy, and if we are honest with ourselves, Mr. Speaker, as you've heard the Leader of Government's Business state... He has expressed the contents of NOAA and what and why we are here in terms of the comparability findings under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

In plain language, Mr. Speaker, what NOAA has done is judge our country to state that our regulatory framework and our enforcement of protecting marine mammals from bycatch and intentional harm are not yet comparable in effectiveness to those of the United States. And, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of Government's Business again, I don't know how many of us listened to his presentation, or intervention this morning. He listed what these marine mammals are, and if we are honest with ourselves, these marine mammals don't come through our shores; they don't chart our geographic location via sea.

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So when I spoke in other meetings in other Sittings here in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, and I made a representation, and I spoke about the big dogs and the small dogs and how important it is, and it was taken out of context. This is another example and an eye opener for us to see that in order for us to ensure that we can have access and sustain economic development, we sometimes have to bend backwards like small dogs to ensure that we meet these requirements needed for us to have access to the market.

Mr. Speaker, this, of course, is not a judgment on the quality of our fish or on the character of our fishers. It is rather, Mr. Speaker, a judgment on institutions on our ability as a state to monitor, to report and to regulate in a consistent, professional and timely way.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we will debate clauses and sub-classes as we are going to pass this Bill throughout its three stages in this House today, the men and women of Gouyave and St. John, by extension, are continuing to take risks that most of us in this Chamber will never have to take or will not have the ability to take. We ask them to put the sea in the dark, Mr. Speaker, often in rough waters in small vessels. We know that even with our fishing vessel safety regulations, which require extra fuel, radios, life rafts, life jackets, minimum crew and safety gear. Too many of our fishers still sail on the edge, Mr. Speaker, of safety because equipment is expensive and the margins are very thin.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, despite all of these challenges that our fishers face on an annual basis, they remain among the most resilient workers in this country. They have survived hurricanes, Mr. Speaker. They have survived fuel spikes and price spikes. They have survived pandemics. They have survived damaged jetties, a lack of cold storage facilities, and cold storage breakdowns on a regular basis. They continue to feed us despite all of these challenges that they are faced with, Mr. Speaker, and they continue to earn foreign exchange for us even when policy, as the Member for the Town of St. George stated, “bureaucracy lags behind them”.

As Parliamentary Representative for St. John, Mr. Speaker, I have supported our fishers' way before I became an elected Member in office for the constituency of St. John. **(Applause)** And my support to stand behind that sector came as a result of tremendous support and partnership with the private sector and with private sector

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partners. I have been able, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud of that because it doesn't take us to be in a political situation or be the Parliamentary Representative for a particular constituency to understand the issues that affect where we came from, either by birth, by migration or by parental lineage.

We have given EC\$300,000 worth of safety equipment that includes, Mr. Speaker, GPS units of the best kind that you've heard the Honourable Minister and the Member for St. Andrew South-West express in terms of essential gear for our fishers across St. John. With the private sector and private partners, Mr. Speaker, I made it my mission to ensure that when our men and our women go to sea, they go with a fighting chance of coming back home.

This crisis, Mr. Speaker, I would implore again, did not begin with this Administration, and we can't play politics with the issue, Mr. Speaker, but sometimes we have to be honest with ourselves so that we don't mislead the people that we represent. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, as I've stated earlier, we have lost an entire decade to prepare, a decade to enact the regulations, a decade to establish a monitoring system, a decade to ensure that our fishers who feed us would not wake up one morning to discover that their livelihoods are cut off by a foreign Government. That decade is lost, but things are happening, Mr. Speaker, and we are looking ahead. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, this is indeed not a partisan accusation, but this is a structural diagnosis. This ban, Mr. Speaker, is not a default of our fishers, it is a predictable consequence of weak systems, reactive governance and the absence of professionalised institutional practices over many years. And if anyone doubts, Mr. Speaker, the long-standing cracks in our fisheries and our marine governance, we need only to recall, Mr. Speaker, the Gouyave fishers' strike some years ago.

That strike, Mr. Speaker, although very different in some aspects in nature, was a direct reflection of the same underlying truth that we are faced with in this Honourable House today, Mr. Speaker, that when institutions fail to protect the sector, the sector suffers. When institutions plan to fail, Mr. Speaker, communities absorb the cost; when institutions are not proactive, Mr. Speaker, crises meet us unprepared. **(Applause)**

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So, Mr. Speaker, we are here today because institutional fragility left unattended will eventually reach a breaking point. And so, this Fisheries (Amendment) Bill, 2025, is not a symbolic exercise. It is a lifeline, Mr. Speaker. It is the minimum legal foundation that must be placed for Grenada to reapply for a comparability finding from NOAA in 2026.

Mr. Speaker, this is not only about Grenada complying with the United States, but it is also about Grenada maintaining credibility in a global trading system where access is conditional, Mr. Speaker, and where small island developing states must meet elevated sustainable standards if we are to survive. And so if we want our Blue Economy to flourish, Mr. Speaker, if we want our fishers to access premium markets, if you want investors to trust our regulatory regime, then we must build institutions that are modern, that are resilient and science-driven.

The world is watching, Mr. Speaker, how we manage our marine space. The world is watching how we treat vulnerable species; the world is also watching, Mr. Speaker, whether small states can behave like mature, responsible Members of the international community. So passing this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is not only a requirement, but it is a declaration of this Government's seriousness (**applause**) and a commitment that we are, for and we will support the marine and fishing industry of the Blue Economy of our small island.

Mr. Speaker, when a Gouyave fisherman pushes off from the jetty at 3:00 a.m. or maybe from Waltham at 3:00 a.m., in the morning, he does not push off for him alone or for himself alone. He pushes off for his family, for his community and for his parish whose identity is anchored in the sea. This Parliament, Mr. Speaker, must do the same.

We must pass legislations that protect our people, not only today but tomorrow. We must also, Mr. Speaker, ensure that we repair the institutional gaps that brought us here, and we must do so with humility, maturity and an unwavering commitment to safeguarding the livelihoods of our citizens.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this Bill, I stand firmly, proudly with the people of St. John, with our fishers, our exporters, our vendors and all who depend on this sector. And I want this Bill, Mr. Speaker, to mark the beginning of a stronger, more accountable, more resilient fisheries governance system for Grenada. Mr. Speaker,

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we are a small island developing state; we do not dictate the global standards. You've heard the Member on the "Other Side", Mr. Speaker, and through you, mention that. But as a small island and a small islander, Mr. Speaker, we survived by meeting these standards.

In today's world, the market for seafood is governed by environmental traceability, international law is tightening, Mr. Speaker, conservation standards are rising and we are on the brink of COP as well, and I know my time is coming to an end or might have been ended, but I would end by saying, Mr. Speaker, if we want our fish to enter premium markets, if we want our exporters to remain viable, if we want our Blue Economy to attract investment and if we want Gouyave to continue being the "Fishing Capital of Grenada", then our institutions must function as if the world is watching. Because, Mr. Speaker, the world is indeed watching.

In closing, I use this opportunity as well, Mr. Speaker, to remind our public servants of the duty that they have, not for those who are in office now, not for a particular political brand or colour, but for the people whom we all represent. And so we have to ensure that as public citizens and as public servants, Mr. Speaker, we act with professionalism.

We have seen the breakdown of what it costs when we use our personal emails, when we use our personal access to contact information to do the Government's business and Parliament's business. We cannot continue to break down our institutions. That is why I gave my commitment to run, Mr. Speaker, to represent these people and to ensure that our key sectors that contribute to our GDP have longevity and that they are successful. **(Applause)**

So, Mr. Speaker, when institutions fail to support the sector proactively, crises eventually erupt. Let this be our learning lesson, and let's ensure that when we are coming to this Honourable House again at the next Sitting or whenever, Mr. Speaker, that we're coming because we are proactive and we are supporting and conserving the Blue Economy of the state of Grenada. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for the constituency of St. John. Now, I think I have figured out the one for Carriacou and Petite Martinique first, so I will allow you to go, Honourable MP.

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Hon. Tevin Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that Carriacou and Petite Martinique, more so, Petite Martinique, is the fishing capital of Grenada and argument done.

I also want to start off by saying, Mr. Speaker, there are people who know better, and because of political mischief, just decide to make “political mawet”, for lack of a better word... Because I heard, Mr. Speaker, that as a result of our Prime Minister travelling too much to Africa and associating with other people besides a certain government, the US Government put a ban on Grenada as a result of that, and that is why we would not be able to export fish to the US, et cetera, et cetera.

But I think today’s debate, based on what the Leader of Government’s Business has explained and also my good cacabawee friend, through you, Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Fisheries have explained we've gotten some clarity that there were some requirements that were requested since 2016, and they have not been fulfilled. As a result of that, Mr. Speaker, we are here today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Bill. A Bill that is critical to protecting both our fishing industry and the livelihoods of many families who depend on it. As I've stated earlier, the United States has announced that, effective January 1, 2026, fish and fish products from Grenada will be banned from entering the United States market. This decision comes because Grenada has not yet met any of the key requirements under the US Marine Mammal Protection Act.

For us in Carriacou and Petite Martinique, Mr. Speaker, the “Fishing Capital of Grenada”, this is not just policy; this is personal. You see, Mr. Speaker, our fishermen and fisherwomen depend heavily on exporting their catch to the US market. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, is part of the urgent work required to reverse that ban and safeguard the income security and dignity of our people.

The Bill, Mr. Speaker, strengthens our laws by prohibiting the intentional killing or injuring of marine mammals, establishing a monitoring and observer system for greater accountability, creating penalties to ensure compliance and setting the legal foundation for new marine mammal regulations. These reforms, Mr. Speaker, are necessary for Grenada to reapply to the US authorities and to regain market access.

The Ministry of Fisheries, Mr. Speaker, is already advancing monitoring improvement, incident reporting systems, enforcement frameworks and consultation

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with stakeholders to prevent the ban from taking effect. Passing this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is not optional. It is essential. It protects our industry, supports our coastal communities and demonstrates to the world that Grenada is serious about sustainable and responsible fishing, Mr. Speaker.

Might I add, Mr. Speaker, that today's activity, in passing this Bill, I believe, is one of the final requirements to ensure that this ban is reversed. So the Government has been working assiduously to reverse the ban and to safeguard our fishermen and women, and most importantly, the fishing economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I fully support this Bill. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for the constituency of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. The light of the Honourable MP for St. Patrick West was on. I am not sure if you... Would you?

Hon. Joseph Andall: Yes, sir.

Mr. Speaker: The floor is yours.

Hon. Joseph Andall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a pleasant morning to all Members of the Honourable House and all of our viewers in person as well as via different media. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my unqualified support to this very essential piece of legislation. I believe that the merits of it have already been thoroughly explained, and therefore, I won't repeat the details.

But, Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not record my congratulations to the Honourable Minister for the Blue Economy for the quick and effective work that he has spearheaded to ensure that what needs to be done is being done to avoid the ban on our fisheries export to the United States.

And, Mr. Speaker, I wish to comment particularly, today is Men's Day, but a woman, a young woman, has stolen the show. I wish to commend the Honourable Member for the constituency of St. John, my second home **(applause)**, for a sterling contribution to this debate today.

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Mr. Speaker, very often you hear people lamenting about the state of the youth—they this—they that and the other. If there is any doubt in anybody's mind not only about the potential of our young people, but also the proven ability to deliver, the Honourable MP today has dissipated any such doubt by her wonderful delivery. And I strongly recommend that it be made available to all of Grenada for its potency, its clarity, and its conviction.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today as one whose very upbringing was defined by fishing. My father, who is still alive today at age 95, lived his entire adult life, his entire productive life as a fisherman in Gouyave, as well as Levera and Sauteurs. My constituency, St. Patrick West, is one that depends heavily on the fishing industry. Many young men and women from Mt. Craven, Davry, Prospect, Sauteurs and other areas make their living from the sea. Therefore, it is very important that this exercise that we are undertaking today be fully supported, and I am happy to hear that across the political divide the support for this important Bill has been unanimous thus far. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Patrick West. Is it the MP... the Honourable MP for St. George North-East, please, take the floor.

Hon. Ron Redhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise very briefly just to state categorically that I support the passage of this Bill here this morning, and I have just four points to make as it relates to the Bill itself being able to reach this far, and potentially averting the ban that is to come that was announced by NOAA.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that we are here this morning, and it speaks to leadership. You heard all of the various stakeholders mentioned in terms of their contributions bringing us to this point. I want to join in that chorus to congratulate, of course, the Leader of Government's Business for making the presentation this morning of this Bill and also, to congratulate the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Attorney General, of course, most importantly, the Minister responsible for Fisheries, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew South-West. Mr. Speaker, most importantly, to commend the task force that led the charge to be able to get us to this point. It's critical because, Mr. Speaker, it dives into the question about leadership in the country today.

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This issue is a long-standing issue and has been around since 2016, and is only now getting dealt with. Mr. Speaker, I could recall when it was first announced, not in this House, but the chatter on the streets were that because we do all kind of thing and you heard in mentioned by the Member for Carriacou and Petite Martinique that our Honourable Prime Minister was traveling to where and where so it is in a sense a response to that and this and so on, which could not before the from the truth.

I want to make the point about travel. At least when the Honourable Prime Minister travels, he returns the things to Grenada, and we know this for a fact. **(Applause)** Some people come in just to Parliament here, and they aren't attending. They come... They swipe in... Days we aren't seeing them in Parliament Sittings, and now you hear them complaining about not wanting to bring back vehicles to their constituents. They done not doing nothing anyhow...

So I'm saying if the Parliament announces that it is going to give transportation to the office, not to the Member for his personal aggrandisement, but to serve his constituency, he needs to take it because Grenadians would benefit. As far as I know, the constituency, St. George North-West, does have a number of fishermen and fisherfolk and it will augur well if he could bring some ice on that same tray of that truck for them and utilise the vehicle to do just that. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, in commending the task force, we need to now look at how we go forward in the future. We have to be serious about this. The Honourable Member for St. John spoke earlier on about the lack of planning or planning in general of these things. When we talk about these very important sectors like the fishing sector, it is not enough for us to operate in isolation as if the sectors exist, the fisherman could just catch their fish, and then they could just go and sell it and hustle to make it a life. We need to organise these sectors and professionalise them.

A fisherman's income, Mr. Speaker, although sometimes it varies, could be as much as EC\$10,000 a month if they are organised. And as such, Mr. Speaker, that is important too because while we are discussing the imminent ban and the potential removal of that ban, what we need to be talking about is how we make the fishing sector and the fisherman, in particular, a bit more durable in the grand scheme of things, notwithstanding the vulnerability.

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And so, I want to publicly charge the task force. I know you were a sunset task force, and your responsibility essentially came to an end, but coming out of this legislation, let us see how we can develop the framework for enhancing the durability and reducing vulnerabilities for the fishing sector, locally, regionally and potentially internationally.

Mr. Speaker, so with these few words, I want to commend this Bill and declare my fullest support for the passage of this Bill. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for the constituency of St. George North-East. I now invite the Honourable MP for the constituency of St. Mark to take the floor.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste–Curwen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my full support to the Bill as presented by the Honourable Leader of Government's Business and to add my sentiment to some of the good things, some in capital letters and underscore, some of the things that were said by Members both on "This Side" and the "Other Side".

It is not my intention to join the blame game train. I think there are more important things to speak about, so I'll limit myself to the positives. It is really a breath of fresh air and a relief to know that whatever team was put together. I heard about a task force. I'm only here about the task force today, and I want to say that with the sentiment expressed of the importance of this industry, I think my colleague on the "Other Side" would have recognised that people would want to know what is happening.

I have heard that the Government operates on a need-to-know basis. If they feel you need to know, they will tell you, and if not, it is retained. I don't know if that is true, but I really think that a situation like this really was a need-to-know by so many of us because this doesn't just affect the men who actually go out on the sea to fish, but it affects the nation.

We can all claim the fame of being the fishing capital of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, but the thing is, fishing affects all of us, even if it's just for our diet on the table, but it goes further. You have vendors, you have all kinds of people

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who are involved, you have exporters. Speaking about exporters, I also want to add that the fishing industry, the export of fish, facilitates the export of other produce from this country. So it would not have affected the withdrawal of the permission or the access to sell in the US would not only affect the fishermen and the fisherfolk directly, but also other farmer who export other produce like the soursop and so on they use the same Amerijet and so on to export, and so I am sure that everybody, and that a lot of person in this country are breathing a sigh of relief.

When we look at the size of the country's income. I had heard EC\$40 million at one time. I heard the Leader of Government's Business and the Member for St. George South-East say that it's EC\$50 million. Whatever the actual figure is it is a high amount and a significant contribution to our economy and I want to express commendations and congratulations to the fishermen who go out there day in, day out, all kinds of strange hours in the morning or in the night when a lot of us would prefer to be in our bed and they bring the gravy home, whether is directly to the individual households are otherwise they do a great job.

I also want to place on record my appreciation for the growth that I have seen in the fishing industry in St. Mark as a whole, particularly in the area of Waltham. I heard my colleague sister on the "Other Side" mentioned some of the things that she would have done, and I think it would be remiss of me if I didn't say what I had done as well in St. Mark.

I take this opportunity to speak about the time when we used to speak about freezer rooms, the cold room people normally call it, when you froze fish to export and all of that. I was very instrumental in ensuring that, and even finding funds for the adequate size of the cold room to be constructed and so on. I got to know the people in Trinidad who fabricated it, a company called MECALFAB. I'm sure my colleague will know that, and that's how I got to know them because when I realised that the wheels were moving too slowly in the fisheries department, for that, and the fisherman were clamouring, I took it upon myself to directly communicate and get involved to see how that can happen and I'm happy, I'm proud to say that I was a part of that.

And then it became the ice machines, and I was one who brought in the first ice machine to Victoria, and it is still functioning now, quite a few years ago, and also when we got some... Prior to that, we had to go all the way to St. George, our fishermen, to

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purchase ice or sometimes, if Gouyave had access, which they didn't always have, we could get from them as well, and I saw that as a necessity. And so the Ministry of Fisheries gave me the specifications, and they don't know how that ice machine got there, but I made sure that it got there as well. And even when the smaller ones came, St. Mark was also a beneficiary.

And in terms of infrastructure, I want to go back a bit to a time when Grenada... We face a similar situation. We could have been debarred from exporting fish, and this time the EU played a major role in that. Largely, it was in the areas of water quality in which NAWASA played a major role, and also, the infrastructure in terms of the HACCP standard and all of these things that needed to be implemented.

And the Government at the time, and it was a New National Party Administration, and along with other helpers ensured that every landing, every facility where fish was being taken out to be exported or to be sold locally had the HACCP standards in place. That was done. And because it was done speedily... I don't know if they had a task force as well. I want to assume so. We approved to export fish to the EU and, by extension, the US and other countries. A lot of the other countries at that time accepted the EU standard as the gold standard. I'm not sure what is happening now.

Just a few weeks ago, I was listening to the news and looking at a programme of the Ministry of Fisheries, and there were some visitors from Japan, and I heard the Chief Fisheries Officer, as well as the Minister for Fisheries, speak about a number of things that happened. A lot of it was given by the Japanese, what they did for Grenada many years ago, and again, most of it was done under the New National Party. If my memory serves me right, like the Grenville Fish Market, the St. George Fish Market. I'm not sure if the Japanese funded it, but it was built around the time, a new market, again, in keeping with HACCP standards. The Grenville to St. George Road...

And I remember the Minister saying, people might wonder why a road, because you don't fish on a road, and he explained it. So I wouldn't go into explaining that, but it was important at that time to ensure that fish could be transported from Grenville to St. George or wherever it was going to be exported in the best of conditions, because people are very, especially in the international market, careful about the kind of fish that they do.

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So the point is, there might have been some delays. There might have been some oversight here and there, but the point is, there were delays on both sides because things could have been fixed before with our administration and with this administration. Let us be clear on that. The Minister and the Member were able to fix that in weeks. So if this administration has been there for some years, then let's not go into the blame game. Let us not go. Let us look at how, when things are important for the country, we all do whatever we have to do and get it done.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this. What I'm hearing today, I'm very happy. It is a sigh of relief for me. I just hope that whatever little dots that have to be put on the i's, and crosses that have to be put on the t's, are done in an appropriate time so come January, we're all ready. I'm just pleased for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique because this is a win for all of us. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable MP for constituency of St. Mark. I now invite the Honourable MP for St. Patrick East.

Hon. Dennis Cornwall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I must preface by saying I'll be very brief, but I stand in full support of the Bill that was deliberated here this morning, and I'm happy that we have so far gotten good support to be able to pass, but they are a number of things I want to at least touch on.

One of them was the comment about the timing of this Bill being brought into Parliament, and the issue of whether or not, you know, a Member receiving documents and finding that it was insurmountable to have those kinds of documents delivered that late. I believe, again, some of us have to understand that the work of the Government has to continue. The work of the country has to continue, and so we are elected as Members to come to this House to do this people's work.

I also want to basically mention the issue of... Our marine, yes, is dependent on what happens on the land, and again I want to point out that we have seen illicit dumping throughout Grenada and Carriacou by our citizens, and it's something that we must take a keen interest in to stop. Because what happens on the land? It washes away into the sea. It contaminates our fish. The bottles, the plastic bottles...

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I remember last month, I was in Sauteurs trying to encourage people to put their plastic bottles in bins that were provided. What we see, for example, in the case of Sauteurs, is that someone walked away with one of the bins which were provided. I think again, this is madness. You provide the enabling environment for people to do what is right, but they choose to do wrong sometimes.

Again, I want to be basically just give our people the notion that cleaning fish on a roadside could destroy the very thing that we have tried to do today—put measures in place to enhance our handling of fish, whether it is in the markets or elsewhere, so that our image internationally can be maintained, and we can continue to export our fish worldwide.

Again, we must also look at what recently happened with the threat from NOAA to basically ban our fish if we did not take certain steps. And again, I want to commend the Ministry of Marine Affairs, Honourable Lennox Andrews, and his team for making sure that we can avert such a thing.

But again, it all goes back to saying that if we do not take cognisance of what needs to be done on an ongoing basis, not only in fisheries but every sector of this economy, we will be forever facing those kinds of challenges. And so, without further ado, I want to reassure this House that I gave my full support to this Bill and hope that we can get it passed here today. Thank you. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for St. Patrick East. All right, Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to express my deep appreciation to Members of this Honourable House for their contribution to this debate. Thank you so kindly.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

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Clerk (Ag.): A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Fisheries (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that this Honourable House resolves itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider this Bill, Clause by Clause. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

House in Committee.

House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment. Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the Chairman's Report be adopted. Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Chairman's Report adopted.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Clerk (Ag.): A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Fisheries (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Deputy Clerk (Ag.): Item 16 – Request for leave to move the adjournment of

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the House on matters of urgent public importance.

Mr. Speaker: Leader of Government's Business.

Hon. Philip Telesford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I move the Adjournment, I wish to congratulate all of our men on this auspicious occasion, as we celebrate International Men's Day. I recognise the men in this Parliament, and you also have been a man, Mr. Speaker, our Honourable Prime Minister and all of our leaders, including those on the opposing side.

I also want to remember our men who are lodged at the Richmond Hill Prison, those at the hospitals who are aching at this time, those who are home, bedridden because of illnesses. Mr. Speaker, I pray for their healing that God will touch their bodies and bring healing to them; to those who are incarcerated, that they would find comfort in knowing that God indeed is a liberator.

Mr. Speaker, as a father, I want to take this opportunity to remind our young men of the importance of avoiding violence and unnecessary confrontation and to ask our men to consider peaceful resolution to conflicts, and we ask our women to continue to stand by your side as they have always done, because after all, Mr. Speaker, this journey requires a companions in the workplace, at our homes, in the villages, in the church. So we want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to remember all of our men in Grenada, those in the diaspora and the wider communities.

With this, Mr. Speaker, I hereby move that this Honourable House be adjourned, sine die. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Honourable MP for St. Patrick West.

Hon. Joseph Andall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek your leave to make some comments pertaining to my work as a Member of the House Committee.

Mr. Speaker, the House Committee is comprised of five Members with yourself, your Honourable self as the Chair, two Members from the "Government Side" Honourable Tevin Andrews and I, and two Members from the "Opposition Side", the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and the Member for St. Mark.

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Mr. Speaker, sometime in the year 2024, if my memory serves me right, the House Committee considered the question of empowering Members of Parliament to be able to serve their constituencies and their constituents more effectively and more ably.

A decision was taken that a vehicle would be provided to each constituency, not for the personal use of the MP, but to enable the MP to execute his or her functions as a representative of the people. Mr. Speaker, there was unanimity in the committee as it regards that decision. **(Applause)** So it is rather astounding now to hear Members of the Opposition, who sat in that same committee and agreed to the decision, pretend that there is some nefarious intention behind that decision.

Mr. Speaker, when nomination day is set, and we get six people to nominate us, in effect, we are applying for a job, and we are not applying for a side hustle, but for a job to represent people and to get the business of the nation done. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker, through an initiative first set forward by the Honourable Prime Minister, endorsed by Cabinet and subsequently Parliament, each Member of this House, effective 2024, has been enjoying a salary that is above the median income of the average Grenadian. Therefore, there is no reasonable excuse that one can put forward that, after being given adequate notice of a Sitting of this House, you find it more important to be gallivanting, to be chasing dollars, and to be treating your work as a Member of Parliament as a panquai, as a side hustle.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House, people of Grenada, I hope that we are all taking notes of those who waltz in for five minutes and walk back out as if your business is not important. I hope you notice those who, for all sorts of frivolous reasons, refuse to participate in the proceedings of this House, boycotting, when they should be here, calling a so-called press conference, Mr. Speaker. Take note, people of Grenada.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who are here, who show up unless we are ill or out on state business, are the ones who are taking the people's business seriously. **(Applause)** Those who talk about pain and suffering must be the pain they're still feeling post-June 2023. **(Applause)** June 2022. Correction. According to statistics provided by the ministry headed by my Honourable colleague here, the unemployment rate in Grenada has hit a historical low. **(Applause)** 7.5%. And most of the people

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who are not working are either unqualified for the available jobs or simply prefer not to work. The only time in Grenada's history that unemployment was lower was during the period of slavery, when there was forced labour.

So, I wish to commend the entire team led by our Honourable Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, and Minister for Economic Development for doing such a sterling job in guiding the nation's economy even amidst the turbulence of the global climate.

(Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, even though it appears that a decision has been made by one of the two sides on the "Other Side", I would still appeal to what's left of their conscience, Mr. Speaker, to accept the vehicles so you can better represent the people. If you are doing that on a matter of conscience, you should give back the EC\$5,000 a month, too. **(Applause)** And you should not accept the EC\$10,000 constituency allowance, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)** Conscience must not be selective or convenient. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. **(Applause)**

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP.

Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste—Curwen: Mr. Speaker, thank you. For a moment, I thought we were in the debating mood, and so it kind of caught me. The mood caught me, and I rose to seek a point of clarity, but it's not applicable. But since it's on the Adjournment, I would just like to speak on my behalf in terms of the EC\$10,000.

Mr. Speaker, EC\$5,000 that has been given to us goes into our salary, and as you and your staff know, the EC\$10,000 does not go into our bank account, and that I think 14 of us... The EC\$10,000 goes into an account that is the constituency account that has to be accounted for before another disbursement can be made. I don't know if we on "This Side" are treated the same as the "Other Side", but that is our understanding. We have to give an account, bring our bills, have them signed and well verified before we get. So if the EC\$10,000... We cannot give it up. It's not ours. It doesn't go into our accounts. If it's given to the constituency and Members or the "Government Side" feel that they need to take it back, then let them put mechanisms in place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Honourable MP for the constituency of St. Mark.

Question put and agreed to.

**The Sitting of the House of Representatives adjourned sine die at 11:15
a.m.**

PREPARED BY

HANSARD REPORTERS

Ms. Shanta Joseph
Ms. Terry-Ann Thomas
Ms. Carlyn Pierre
Ms. Natalya Isaac
Ms. Zaria Skeete

EDITORS

Adrian Joseph (Dr.) (Clerk, Ag.)
Ms. Leasha Francis (Senior Hansard Reporter, Ag.)