



GRENADA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**THIRD SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**SENATE**

TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2025

***Sitting of the Senate  
held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2025  
at the Parliament Chamber, Mt. Wheldale, St. George's***

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***Sitting of the Senate  
held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2025  
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***Attendance***

**PRESENT**

Madam President  
Senator the Honourable Dr. Dessima Williams  
*in the Chair*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Senator the Honourable Adrian Thomas      | - Minister for Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture   |
| Senator the Honourable David Evlyn Andrew | - Minister for Education   |
| Senator the Honourable Quinc Britton      | - Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture with Responsibility for Culture |
| Senator the Honourable Seville Francis    | - Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Youth and Sports  |
| Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph   | - Attorney General and Minister for Legal Affairs, Labour and Consumer Affairs   |
| Senator the Honourable Gloria Ann Thomas  | - Minister for Social & Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs (Social Security)                            |
| Senator the Honourable Norland Cox        | - Opposition Member of the Senate (Deputy President)   |
| Senator the Honourable Dwight Hosford     | - Opposition Member of the Senate  |
| Senator the Honourable Mondy André Lewis  | - Member of the Senate (Labour Rep.)   |
| Senator the Honourable Salim Rahaman      | - Member of the Senate (Business Rep.)   |
| Senator the Honourable Roderick St. Clair | - Member of the Senate (Farmers Rep.)  |

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***Attendance***

**ABSENT**

Senator the Honourable Dr. Myanna Charles - Opposition Member of the Senate  
(*Excused*)

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***Prayers***

***Announcements***

***Ministerial Statements***

**The Sitting of the Senate began at 9:08 a.m.**

**(Senate Prayer was said)**

**(The Lord's Prayer was said)**

**(Sound of gavel)**

**Madam President:** Good morning, Honourable Members, the Senate is convened.

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 3 – Oath of Allegiance or Affirmation of a new Senator.

Item 4 – Confirmation of Minutes.

Item 5 – Messages from the Governor-General.

Item 6 – Announcements by Madam President.

**Madam President:** Honourable Members, again, a pleasant good morning. We last convened in December in recess for Christmas break. This is our first meeting for the year, and as we said in prayer this morning, we ask God for his continued guidance that we may deliberate for the good of this country and for the good of his holy name. We prayed that we would deliberate very wisely. Thank you.

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 7 – Ministerial Statements.

**Madam President:** Thank you. I offer the floor to Senator the Honourable Gloria Joseph. **(Laughter) (Inaudible comment by Senators)** Aye, aye, aye.

**Sen. Gloria Thomas:** You could say, Samuel.

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**Madam President:** Yes, Gloria Thomas–Samuel.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Pleasant, good morning to all in this House and in the wider community. Madam President, I rise to share some of the recent activities in the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs.

Madam President, the Ministry of Social Development, along with Advocacy Grenada, hosted a programme, EmpowerAbility Grenada. This programme is transformative in nature and seeks to empower individuals with disabilities aged 18 to 35, using a holistic approach. Madam President, the aim of the programme is to offer tailored training in mental health education and to support parents and service providers.

The first session was held at the Olympic House on January 28 with the service providers. Those are the people who are expected to work with people with disabilities. The aspect of trauma was explored. As we are aware, it is important for service providers to deal with their own trauma before they can actually work with vulnerable groups, as their trauma can affect the way they relate to the client.

The programme has a focus on addressing specific challenges faced by our young people with special needs and strives to foster an inclusive and supportive environment that promotes their growth and development. EmpowerAbility Grenada will enable individuals with disability to establish and manage their own small businesses, specialising in handmade jewellery and pottery. This will not only promote their independence but also contribute to the economic development in the rural areas.

This initiative holds great potential for both individuals with disability and the rural communities, creating opportunities for growth and prosperity. I must add here that Advocacy Grenada was established by one of our own local interests, Ms. Michelle Brathwaite, who likes to refer to herself as an “Anglican High School girl”. So we are working along with Advocacy Grenada to provide services for people with disability.

***Suicide Criminalisation***

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Madam President, I am pleased to report that the Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Gender Affairs participated in a consultation on suicide decriminalisation. This consultation was headed by CariCope Wellness to help formulate a suicide prevention plan for the criminalisation of suicide in Grenada. CariCope Wellness is an organisation dedicated to promoting holistic health and wellness for Caribbean people.

We have seen an increase in suicide and attempted suicide in all parts of the world, and over the past few decades, it has reached alarming statistical levels. The research has shown that criminalisation has been counterproductive to suicide prevention, and so as a ministry, we are leading the charge to be the first island in the Caribbean to work to ensure that decriminalisation of suicide becomes a reality.

Madam President, research has shown that the provision of mental health and psychosocial support for individuals who are struggling with mental issues is what is needed to help individuals overcome their struggles. The psychosocial unit within the Ministry of Social Development is well poised to assist persons experiencing acute stress, depression, anxiety and a range of other mental health issues, which can be precautions to suicidal behaviour.

Madam President, as a ministry, we believe that in order for us to move forward to continue promoting mental health services for all citizens, suicide decriminalisation must become an essential part of our advocacy, and so, Madam President, we have started the process. We are convinced that suicide is preventable, and together we can save lives.

***Boys to Men***

Madam President, 17 young men from the St. Patrick's parish graduated from the Boys to Men Programme. This pioneering initiative, led by the Men's Bureau in collaboration with SAEP and Cuso International, made a significant contribution, which aided in the completion of the programme. This programme is geared towards supporting and uplifting our young men.

We recognise that our society faces significant challenges. We see an alarming increase in violence and various forms of deviant behaviours. And so the Ministry of

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Social Development cannot sit idly by, as we recognise the urgent need to address these issues and engage our young men and boys in a constructive way.

This programme, Madam President, will soon be expanded to the Parish of St. Andrew. This marks another step in our mission to promote positive change and healthy masculinity across Grenada.

By empowering our young men, we are investing in the future of our nation, and so, Madam President, the work in the Ministry of Social and Community Development continues. To date, the Beryl Relief Income Support programme payment is ongoing in Carriacou as we speak and is expected to be completed by the end of this week. Following the completion of the payments in Carriacou, payments on the mainland will commence. Madam President, I'm happy to be able to give this ministerial update to this Honourable House. Thank you.

**Madam President:** I thank the Minister for Social Development for her report. In the interest of learning more about it, may I ask you, Madam, how the ministry understands the link between suicide decriminalisation and suicide prevention? Be so kind as to...

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Suicide decriminalisation will ensure that the people who attempted suicide will not be taken to prison or be charged for the offence. We recognise that when people attempt suicide, it's not because they're bad, but because they need mental health support and putting a man in prison is not helping him with his mental health challenge.

So, we want to ensure that it is decriminalised, so that we can work with these people and ensure that they can reach a state of social functioning in society. So although it is on our books, oftentimes it is not really implemented, but we want to make sure that it is not even on the books because people could use that on the books to treat with how they feel they personally think they could handle.

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For example, you think this guy is not a person who is worthy to be in society, you may say let him go to prison, and then sometime again, you'll give another person a break. So we want it to be off the books, so everyone is on normal footing or an even footing in this regard.

So this is the decriminalisation. We want it off the books so that when people have mental health issues or if they attempt suicide, we can help them through psychosocial support because we recognise this is a mental health issue, which oftentimes drives one to want to commit suicide.

**Madam President:** Thank you. So, we anticipate this proposed legislation before it comes.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Yes, we are working on a policy, and we'll be taking it forward to amend the legislation.

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator. Thank you very much, and thank you for the efforts of your ministry in this regard. Senator Roderick St. Clair, good morning, and you may speak.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Good morning, Madam President. Good morning to all the Senators in this Chamber and, of course, everyone listening and following on the outside. Of course, as usual, I commend Sister Thomas every time she gives us these updates. She normally updates us on what I'll say is, it's not just the regular run of the mill, you know, innovations, things that they are trying, new things, some they may have challenges with and some they will succeed. But I think the ministry needs that sort of support.

While we speak about all the other issues, our social issue, sometimes we don't worry about it. Maybe, I'm not a sociologist in that by training, but maybe the whole issue

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of what you call social wealth, might be a word that we may want to look at in terms of the value of that connectivity and good behaviour and all of those things of our citizen.

And so, the issue of the Boys to Men, we know that that has been a challenging area, not only in Grenada, but all over the place, and so whatever can be done in those regards, little as it is and modelling is good and it's good to start some of these things small and build. I think the support that you need is very, very important to this. What we are seeing also is a lot of voluntarism, which seems to be involved in the support of this and the community involvement, so this is good.

The issue of suicide is a serious matter, particularly in connection with mental health, because sometimes, it's that trigger momentarily or consistently. People go through many different challenges as the world has different things. How do we cope? So, more and more could be done in those areas. Of course, the kickback in the decriminalisation context is... The insurance companies, we know, can have some kickbacks. If you commit suicide or die by suicide, and you have some life insurance, it is my understanding that it could be a challenge in how you obtain money as the beneficiaries. So that is something that you can get some kickback on.

But the investigation's purpose and all of those things... The police role will be very critical in really ascertaining, because I think there was some case sometime in the past where it was assumed to be a suicide, and then apparently it really was a homicide.

But the essence of the matter, I think that the discussion would make people understand more and maybe even the person having those thoughts, may start thinking that life could be better, life could be better and it means that we have to be each other's keeper and pick up those signals and signs and so on because it's not really good.

It's a reflection sometimes on the society: the pressures, unemployment, disputes and all of those things. So, the more we can have a happier nation and live more supportive and together, it is very important. The issue of fun and games, sports, and culture in the role is also very important in that.

Even us. We get stressed out at the end of the day. Sometimes, after a long day, you'll need something to do. You need to play some dominoes, maybe, or play something

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to keep us active. How do we create that integration? I think it's very important, and so we have to commend you, Senator Thomas, and the ministry, and just keep doing what you've been doing, and we look forward to 2025 to see some more exciting programmes and initiatives from your ministry.

**Madam President:** On behalf of Senator Thomas—Samuel, I thank you for thanking her. I agree with you that it's a rather vigorous set of undertakings we need, and that is happening to keep this country on a strong and sustainable social development path. Thank you, Senator St. Clair, for your observations. I offer the floor to Senator David Andrew. Is it you? No? Senator Quinc Britton. It's you? Yes.

**Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton:** Good morning, Madam President and as per usual, I bring you warm greetings from Sunset City. Happy New Year to you and the staff. I think it's our first time, yes, it is our first time meeting here, so Happy New Year to you, and I'm wishing you and the staff all the best. God's blessings and prosperity for 2025. Madam President, I rise just to bring some brief updates from the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture, more specifically, Culture.

Over the past several weeks, Madam President, we've been collaborating with different stakeholders to do a number of things. One, in the most recent time, with the delegation that visited China and signed some Memoranda of Understanding, as well as renewing cooperation between the two cities, Ningbo City in China, one of the provinces in China, twinned with St. Patrick. They had a cultural exchange, where a cultural group visited and did performances at St. Patrick's Anglican School. That was a success. The people were very, very happy to see a different kind of culture, and I really hope to see the return leg, where we'll have people from St. Patrick going over to Ningbo City to share their culture as well, Madam President.

As a ministry, Madam President, we are doing whatever we can to strengthen our capacity. We have already started in terms of doing our internal review, doing our internal training and so on. We are doing that. We will be expanding our staff, strengthening our

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staff and so on. So the staff development has started, where we have done a number of workshops over the past several weeks. As we all know, we are in Independence week, Madam President and a number of activities have taken place thus far. I just want to thank the general public for continuing to support the events as they come along, in collaboration with the National Celebrations Committee.

Together with the Pan Association, we've done Pan on the Sand. That event happened two Sundays ago, well, last Sunday, as a matter of fact. And that too was really, really thrilling and exciting to see all the young... Well, there were different stages; it had the young as well as they had the veterans. I must commend, if you may permit me to single out Commancheros, they had the Junior, the Senior and the senior citizens playing, and that was very, very interesting, Madam President. So if you were not there, you missed something.

Over the weekend, Madam President, we had the Independence Monarch competition, where we had... It was very, very competitive. We had Jermaine Simon, a "Superstar". She won the judge's heart on the night. She won the competition. And I just want to say congratulations to her, as well as everyone who participated and everyone who had a stake in making that event successful. We had the church service on Sunday at Crochu, Madam President. We had, in Carriacou, a cultural evening. We are moving on. Yesterday, we had as part of our celebration, we did a treat for the schools, and my comrade minister could give some more details as to what the rest of the treats will be.

But we did a symbolic gesture, Madam President, where all the schools throughout Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, all the primary schools to be exact, where we give exercise books. And that exercise book, on the cover, has three or four of our Olympic athletes. Behind the cover, there is a quote from every one of those athletes trying to encourage children to be the best that they can, to dream big, but it happens through hard work and dedication. So most of what I've seen from my experience, the children was very happy to receive that symbolic gesture because is something that is a safe keep that you can keep for the rest of their lives.

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We're moving on, this week, Madam President. There will be an inter-ministerial independence competition, where all the ministries showcase their creative abilities, decorate, and come to get some lovely tasting food. That would be on Thursday, which is National Colours Day, so besides being draped in your national colours, you can pass by the Ministry and see their creativity, what they have to offer, and so I'm pretty sure they normally pull out all the different tricks in their hats.

I've seen, I don't want to let the surprise out as yet, but the various ministries are working very hard, that's what I would say. So it's something that you know, you, as well as the general public, could come and witness because it's a competition, and they go hard at it, Madam President.

We have the, we're winding down to the big day, the Military Parade and so on at the park. But even before that, Madam President, on the morning of independence, I'd like to invite each of you to come to Sunset City in Victoria from 5:30 in the morning, where we do an event called "Rise to Independence". We know St. Mark, Victoria, in particular, is famous for our traditional mass, the Vieux Corps. So, the guys use their creative ability to make costumes and so on, as well as we showcase some of our cultural performance and so on, using the school groups there to highlight some of the things that we do or recognising the significance of independence.

Last year, I remember that event. Last year was the first time we did it, and it was amazing. The Prime Minister was there; he hoisted the flag. So the first flag that was hoisted on Independence Day was in Victoria, St. Mark, and this year we plan to do just the same or even better. So the event will be on Diamond Street, Hero Square to be exact, so we invite everyone to turn out there. Later on that day, we also have the, like I mentioned, the military parade and so on, and that promises to be another spectacle, and we are bringing back again, Madam President, as a part of the entertainment later on in the evening, last year, it was one that was out of this world, what we've seen in the region.

In fact, I think we set the trend for a lot of the other Caribbean islands with the drone show, so we are having that again. So this time it would not be the same thing that you saw last year, so it would be different, but that's something that we all look forward

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to. So it's just a matter of encouraging, Madam President, all the different people far and wide to participate in all the independence activities because at the end of the day, this is who we are, celebrating our uniqueness as a people. I transcend all, any political boundaries and that kind of thing. We are Grenadian; we have to feel proud, and it's our moment to celebrate.

As the theme for this year's independence says, "The Next 50: Embracing a Future of Development, Transformation and Unity". So let us unite as we celebrate the next 50. I hope you and I will be around to see the next 50, and we celebrate, as we go year by year, everyone that we see, we celebrate as if it were our last. So with that, Madam President, thank you for the opportunity to allow me just to give some brief updates. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Senator from Sunset City and Senator from the rising city as well. Thank you for all the invitations, and let me announce that Senator the Honourable Myanna Charles has tendered an excuse for today, she is unable through circumstances which she has no control over, she's unable to attend, and she sent her apologies. Senator Salim Rahaman, Happy New Year, and you have the floor, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to you, colleagues and those listening at home and abroad, Grenadians at home and abroad. If I have not done so before, I wish you God's richest blessings for 2025 and always.

Senator Britton, in his brief report, mentioned the strengthening of ties between the two cities, namely St. Patrick and Ningbo, in his comments. I want to touch on the importance of that sort of relationship, not only between countries, but between provinces or parishes, in our situation.

Provinces like Ningbo in China... The GDP of that province is much larger than that of many countries in the world, even industrialised countries. They are strong on

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manufacturing, especially as it relates to the automotive sector, and many of us may know about Alibaba. They're headquartered in that region, and the international phone company, Huawei, is also headquartered in that region.

And I say this to say that the importance of what Senator Britton was touching on or mentioning is that when we deepen relations between provinces, we break down barriers that may exist. If you have to go through Government official channels, you actually have closer ties. It helps in terms of trade, it helps in terms of business opportunities, because it helps in terms of communication. So I just wanted to touch on that point a little bit more from a business perspective and the importance of the twinning of those two provinces. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Rahaman. Get directly to the relationship, in other words? Thank you, Senator. Honourable Adrian Thomas, you have the floor, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to you and your staff, my colleagues on the "Other Side", and my colleagues here. Madam President, I want to wish everybody a happy New Year, and this house in particular, all the best for 2025. I think we have been doing a fantastic job for the past couple of years, so I want to encourage us to continue on that trend as we deal with the people's business in the interest of developing this country.

Madam President, I rise to just give a little update on the Ministry of Tourism, in particular, and the tourism industry. Grenada continues, Madam President, to be a very important destination to world travellers who are looking for peace of mind, they're looking for relaxation, they're looking to place themselves in a different environment than where they come from. And Grenada's traits, hospitality, and friendliness, I must say, the service in many of the hotels continues to be a pillar of strength to this sector.

The peaceful environment that we have in this country, while we may have a few incidents that trouble our minds, Grenada still enjoys that level of safety. People feel safe

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coming to Grenada. The security in Grenada, compared to other nations in the Caribbean and worldwide, is still high up on the agenda in world ratings. We are very grateful for that. That in itself helps Grenada to be a very important destination for all travellers. Our lovely sites, beaches, our sculpture park in Grenada and in Carriacou, our culture, our food, and our way of life are very, very important to this very sector and attract a lot of people.

Madam President, our visitors continue to come in thousands from the main area, North America, the United States in particular, and we continue to enjoy an increasing number of stay-over visitors from North America. In 2024, Madam President, we enjoyed an increase of over 11% of visitor arrivals in Grenada from North America. Surprisingly, Madam President, the next part of the world where we enjoy that is in the Caribbean, despite the difficulties we have in transporting people within the various islands. The people from Trinidad, people from St. Lucia, Dominica, Guyana, they still find ways and means of beating back that challenge, finding their way to Grenada. And therefore, in 2024, we enjoy a 6% increase in the number of arrivals, and then we go up to Europe, where most of our visitors come from the UK; there has also been an increase.

And I must say, Madam President, those increases that we are enjoying now are figures that we were longing to see since after COVID-19, and everybody would be aware that there was a terrible drop in arrivals, and obviously, we know the reasons why; we would not go into details. But we are in 2024, and by the end of 2024, we will begin to see a return to those figures that we have enjoyed prior to COVID-19. So this is positive, and a lot of our visitors still come from Canada as part of the North American brigade.

Madam President, we still face a serious challenge in terms of airlift to Grenada, and I don't think we're the lone voice in the Caribbean talking about this. CARICOM has been talking about it for a very long time. People are looking for ways and means of getting travellers to move a little more freely and cheaply. It's a serious challenge.

But, I am pleased, Madam President, that we are making little headway, especially from North America, where JetBlue is doing a good service in terms of transporting people from New York and Boston and earlier in the year we enjoyed a trip from Charlotte. Air

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Canada is still carrying people. They moved from twice a week to four times per week in the latter part of 2024. But I think in 2025, they will be looking at things. They will be going back twice per week, but we will continue to talk with them and see how we can do better because there are a lot of Grenadians in North America who really and truly want to come home.

American Airlines continues to do a tremendous service on a daily basis to Grenada. We wish it could be flying from other states, but we are enjoying their daily trips to Miami. British Airways; we still enjoy them three times per week. Virgin Atlantic; twice per week in the summer and three times per week in the winter. Within the Caribbean, we have Sunrise Airways and LIAT 2020. LIAT 2020 is travelling all the way from Antigua, St. Lucia, and Grenada. That route, they're doing it twice a week, and we must say that we are very happy to enjoy the direct trip to Guyana with InterCaribbean. I think Grenadians and Guyanese are enjoying the direct flights. I look forward to the days when we're going to have... **(Applause)** Thank you

I remember, in my holidays in secondary school, we had a lot of teachers coming from Guyana. I must say, as a student, the highest level of qualification, with due respect among our teachers in those days, was people coming from <sup>1</sup>IFE, and when the Guyanese came here, they were coming straight from university, and the level of education rose. So that connection and that bond between Grenada and the people from Guyana, I think we have to cherish it, and they're quite ... Guyana and Grenada have been enjoying that bond like how the Jamaicans and the Grenadians enjoy that bond when they see each other. So, it's a plus and welcome that initiative, and we look forward to more flights at some point in time when everybody gets accustomed to travelling within both countries.

So, Madam President, on that note, I may have further updates, but as time progresses, we will provide this House with the necessary information and the Grenadian public. Thank you very much.

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Further Education

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**Madam President:** Thank you, Minister. We hope that as the flights increase, prices decrease. We look forward to that, and thank you for your report and the efforts of tourism. Senator André Lewis. Mondy André Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Good morning to everyone, and although we are in February, not to be left out, I'm just wishing everyone all the very best for the rest of the year.

Madam President, I just wish to attempt to combine two issues. The observation and report by the Leader for Government's Business, which we have been able to boast about in the past and continue to boast about, our security, peace and tranquillity relatively speaking and the aspect of social programmes, psychosocial support with the new, well I don't want to say best or trump card that is in the air today, the aspect of deportation from United States. These will pose serious challenges for us.

Therefore, it requires a very integrated collaborative approach, not just by the Government as the official heads, but for us as a society. Obviously, the Government will have to take the lead, yes, and we need to give whatever support is required. While I also spoke about the psychosocial aspects, the aspect that we have seen an increase in, as the Senator in Social Services indicated, is suicide.

The aspect of deportation. Apart from those who may have been serving criminal sentences and are being sent back to their country, which most likely be increased, there will be a number of citizens, Grenadians, living in the US, who go about their daily business normal and just being uprooted and sent back to Grenada without any linkage. We need to give thought to the psychological impact that it can have. Therefore, systems... I know it will not be easy. Therefore, it also requires a CARICOM-wide approach, but I'm starting with us. I am starting with us... Considerations to be given.

To the relatives who will be faced with your relatives just being sent back to you, and I'm here trying to find soft words because I do not wish to make our people who will be returned be seen in a negative light, yes. So, I'm very careful with what choice of words I use. But, you know, it can be very daunting.

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It can be very daunting moving from a state where, during the Christmas season or throughout the year, through remittances, through what we call the barrels, where we expect, because it is part of international solidarity, I mean as part of the family structure, where people who would normally look out for us are now being sent back and become dependent on us and we can't really much help. So we'll have to dig deep. It has serious implications. It has serious implications. We are where we are. The United States will do what it has to do. It will do what it has to do. Our focus has to do with what we could do to help the landing be more accommodating.

I have also heard some of the pronouncements of our security forces in terms of immigration, in terms of what treaties that we have with the US and the expectation and the law that you'll be given early notice, et cetera, there will be a procedure to be followed. If I could venture so far as to say, as much as there are these treaties and agreements, please be prepared that one day you may just wake up and there's a plane load at the airport, yes, that we are not informed about. So as much as I know, diplomatically we have to give certain answers when we are speaking, but it is my expectation, given my confidence in our institutions, that there will be plan A, plan B, and plan C or whatever is required.

So I'm just using this to combine both, because what we have going for us is our security. What we have going for us is our peace and tranquillity, but there will be, most likely, interferences with our culture. It is not necessarily that people are bad, but circumstances and environment can lend themselves to making things more challenging for us.

So from our end in terms of labour terms, in terms of the wider community, I just wanted to flag that and for us to continue giving thought to how best we can, as a people, as a region, help mitigate, as much as possible, some of these implications. There was a very interesting discussion last night, before I end, on Beyond the Headlines, conducted by Mr. Colin Dowe with Jackie Mackenzie and Dr Fletcher. It shows that we are thinking and that is our expectation, but we need to see what systems we can put in place as we prepare for what will be coming to our shores, not if, it is closer than probably most people

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anticipate. I hope I'm wrong, but the evidence that we have seen outside there does not indicate that I may be wrong, so we need to prepare. I just wanted to flag that, Madam President. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. I believe that I'm correct when I say that there is a distinction between a deportee and a returnee. It might be incumbent on us to keep that in mind as we receive nationals coming back. The returnees are persons who have not committed any crime or any wrongdoing, but they're involuntarily returned here. And then there are the deportees, who are persons who have been charged, maybe convicted, with a crime and returned. Either way, your point is well taken that this influx of uprooted persons who are our nationals will have an impact on them and on us and thanks for calling us to be on the alert and to be prepared. Thank you, Senator. I offer the floor to Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to you and good morning to all of my colleagues in this Chamber. Good morning to persons within listening and viewers following this, both at home and abroad. I take the opportunity to wish you, Madam President, your staff, and all listening, a very happy, meaningful and productive 2025; one that is filled with health, well-being, peace of mind and success in everything that is attempted.

I also take the opportunity to wish all of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, both in the physical geographical spaces and in the diaspora, a happy 51st Independence Anniversary celebration. I know we're just a few days away, but I may not get a chance to say this to all persons listening before the 7th. So, I take the opportunity to say so to them, to you and all Grenadians. Happy 51st Independence Anniversary celebration this year, 2025.

Madam President, I quickly want to give a few updates on some key things that have been happening in the Ministry of Education and I start with the fact that yesterday, the Ministry of Education, and Senator Britton alluded to it, led in collaboration with the

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Ministry of Youth, led a ministerial team and Government representatives to primary schools to distribute keepsake copy books, exercise books featuring some of the 2024 Paris Olympians, Lindon Victor, Anderson Peters, Kirani James, and it's very instructive that we chose to visit the primary schools because they are the next 50.

In fact, the theme says, "The Next 50: Embracing a Future of Development, Transformation and Unity". While Anderson Peters, Kirani James, Lindon Victor and several others that we can point to even before in the previous 50 and 50 before that have all made their contributions, the next 50 really and truly belong to those students.

And so, we are clear, from a ministry's point of view, and we are clear as a Government, that strategic focus must be placed on them in transforming their thinking, their outlook, their attitude towards Grenada, the way they embrace the values of "Grenadianism", and their history. I know that we have taken some concrete steps in terms of introducing history in schools and all of that, but these initiatives, reaching those students, certainly enhance the focus on them with a view to keeping them very conscious-minded of their role in shaping and creating the next 50. So we're happy to have done that.

I also want to point out that hard cover notebooks will be distributed to secondary school students as well, with the same view, same vein, same thinking, but just that we did not have the time to get it all done before Independence, so those will come post-independence, but to serve the same purpose.

Madam President, I want to report that since our last Sitting, while I said the last time we sat in this Honourable House about the goal to launch the First Generation Scholarship opportunity, I'm happy to report that we've had over 435 Grenadians already enrolled and oriented as of January 2025. They have started their studies with Monroe University under the Ministry of Education, under the Government's First Generation Scholarship opportunity. **(Applause)**

These are people from a household where nobody else has had the opportunity or has had a university degree. And I've met some people who felt that they probably never could have, and they're happy because they never thought they would get the opportunity

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to. But this is in keeping with the Government's objective to see at least one university graduate in every household, and that is why we are specifically targeting households where nobody there has a degree, and we are on our way.

The other 15, by the way, had little issues in being accepted in time for the January intake, so there is an April intake, so we have those around 15 getting there to make the full complement of the 50 for this first cohort, and then we are already processing the second 50 for September 2025. So we are moving speedily ahead with this initiative and commendations to the Ministry of Education's hardworking team at this scholarship desk for the continued work in promoting this, the First Generation Scholarship opportunity.

Madam President, I also want to take the opportunity to commend and to highlight the partnership the Minister for Education has engaged in with the Ministry of Infrastructure (the Prime Minister's Ministry), to see the launch of the Spice School Bus initiative. It's clear to us, all of us who travelled, all of us who commute, we see bundles of students all over sometimes all over sometime 8:00 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 8:30 a.m., in some cases, and you know they're going to arrive to school late and that's loss of productivity. That's a loss of instructional time. That's a waste of resources because somebody's being paid to teach them, and they are not there on time, and then they go to all of these processes, sometimes gates are locked, various things happen that further debar them from that important instructional contact type.

This initiative seeks to in some way address this by ensuring that students have a reliable opportunity to attend school, that they are able to do so safely because they are tracking mechanisms to make sure you know where the students are at what time, and the buses are going to follow different routes. Now, it's in a pilot stage. There are a few things that will probably be worked out over the next six months. In fact, it's due to officially start within a week from now.

But I really want to commend our Prime Minister, Honourable Dickon Mitchell, for leading the change in his department for transportation to see this partnership realised, and it promises to provide a lot of solutions for some of the other and wider transport issues that we have. So the pilot should go well, I could envisage being rolled out for

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senior citizens as well. I could see it rolling out for different sections of the population to ease some of the transport challenges that we have. So I look forward to the full and wider implementation of this Spice Bus initiative, with which we have partnered with the private sector. So it's not a competition. It's not something where we are going to compete with the private sector businesses. We're collaborating with them to innovatively and transformatively solve the problems that we have and that we have been faced with over the years. **(Applause)**

Madam President, I quickly want to give you some very positive updates as it relates to schools in Carriacou. You would remember that the last two schools that were still operating under tents were Dover and Mt. Pleasant. I have very good news. The work at Mt. Pleasant is almost complete to the extent that the main operational areas: the labs, the auditorium, the kitchen, all of those have been completed, and so the entire student population is expected to be within the main building come Monday, 10th February, 2025. God's willing. **(Applause)**

So there is no longer a need for the tents on the Mt. Pleasant compound, so those will be removed. There are one or two other things to continue doing, but those things will not stop the operation of the school, and the work could continue safely without endangering the students. We are very, very happy about this development, and we look forward to finally completing all of the work on Mt. Pleasant. Yes? We thank our contractor, Creative Designs, for working speedily to see the work done comprehensively and to the quality. We look forward to that continued collaboration.

In relation to Dover, I'm sure I can't talk about Mt. Pleasant and not mention Dover. That was the school that was completely destroyed. We have had several consultations with stakeholders there, the teachers, the principles, education officials, parents and in fact they were happy to see my Honourable colleague doing his fatherly duty attending one of the consultations and making his input quite meaningfully, Senator Cox, in one of those consultations that we had with parents and stakeholders.

I think, while we saw it as a ministry, we saw the opportunity to rebuild a state-of-the-art skill centre featuring several different skills that we will collaborate with them on at

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that location in the Dover area and probably merging the small school population in some of the other schools, the population there didn't quite see it that way. They felt strongly that they wanted the school back there. So we heard their cries and we are going to rebuild guided by the wishes of the stakeholders in Carriacou and Petite Martinique in the Dover community. The hundreds of years of tradition, the many generations of persons, so it's not just the school, as we were made to become quite aware, and so we are happy.

They're prepared to continue occupying the tents at Windward in the immediate. They look forward to upgrades in a temporary structure on that site that was talked about and agreed to. The ministry is currently working to review these lands, which we hope will be available before the end of this school year, so they can actually have a temporary structure while we continue to engage in the process of official designs, both architectural and engineering designs, for the reconstruction of the Dover School, including facilities for skills. So we are happy about that, and we look forward to the next steps with Dover. We thank all of the constituents from the Dover School community, parents, and principals for engaging us and sharing honestly and frankly, because we listen and we respond to what is shared.

In the meantime, I am happy to report that work on the Petite Martinique pre-school goes on and it's scheduled to finish before the end of this month, February. There is no loss of instruction to the Petite Martinique pre-schoolers because they are housed comfortably at the main school. So their building is being separately repaired, and so there is no loss there.

So, Madam President, having said these brief things and updates, I am happy to take my seat and just assure you that the Ministry of Education continues to push and to make sure that no child is left behind as we deliver educational services across the country. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator, for your update, and I'm glad to know another edition of the sports heroes would be coming out. I hope it comes next year with

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a female among them. **(Laughter)** We just have to find one, so those little girls can feel as excited as those little boys. Senator Rahaman, you have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. I would like to use this opportunity to commend my colleague, David Andrew, and his team, including the Prime Minister's Ministry, for the public transportation initiative for children. Very, very important, not only from a reliability standpoint, but also from a safety standpoint.

When we have our children and... That is why we see it in many industrialised countries. When we have our children using the same buses that traverse the island with our other workers, we have the opportunity for abusive language, loud music, and other things that detract from their schooling and the mindset that we want to create in our youth and promote.

I also would like to commend them for the fact that, even though it is a pilot project, they are using the traditional private sector approach to providing public transportation. What works for us in Grenada is unique, and it has been working for us for many, many decades, and it is just a matter of finding the right mix, tweak, as we say, for the different areas that our society needs.

So I am happy to see that the private sector provides public transportation now, and that has been maintained. I congratulate you on that. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Rahaman, for your congratulations. I offer the floor to Senator Mondy André Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you, Madam President. I, too, rise to recognise the importance of that step in terms of the pilot project. For years, Labour has been clamouring for the state to address the aspect of transport. So we wish to place on record our notice on this approach. But also call for speeding up, on the aspect of transportation, for the workers, because the aspect of productivity is significantly impacted, and I think we are all on the same page with this. I look forward to this matter

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being addressed. I will address it further once we have a different session like this, but I just needed to know that.

On the aspect of the distribution of the exercise books to our national sports people, Madam President. I heard your observation, but I am saying national sports people...

**Madam President:** I heard that.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** ... Heroes. We do have other females who can be up there from years gone by, but we will take it as it is.

I was looking at the news and I looked at my dear friend, if I may say Senator Joseph and other colleagues, you know what immediately crossed my mind? I wish to throw this out. Yes. As we celebrated 50 and we are heading to the next 50, and we use our three national sports heroes, there was and is an opportunity, unless the materials were purchased out of individual pockets, yes, from the state, to have an across-the-board approach.

The message I think could have actually used that to send is that as we mature as a nation, we would like to see across-the-board, across-the-table, across-the-divide engagements. There was a possibility of having someone or someone else, what I would say, from the "Other Side", for want of conversation. If they said no... If our colleagues Cox and others said no, then it's a matter for them, and you allow the public to know, but I think that some items could have been given.

You don't have to do it together. I would love to see it be done together. For instance, my two friends from the Town of St. George, I would love to see them together, but that's beside the point. What I am saying is that there are opportunities for us; it has not been taught about that possibility, so I am raising it there. I looked at it and it just came on and I said "wow", that would have been a major statement. The Government would have been on a moral high ground, if I can say this.

David Many times there are these opportunities and we long for the day when occasions like these present themselves because come on the 7th, come on Friday we

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will be sitting together in the National Stadium and that exercise yesterday, my colleague Senator Andrew was not just because it was the Ministry of Education, It's a broader national, political independence as our calypsonian, Rootsman Kelly, have indicated and said, "You can't separate the two, independence from politics", and therefore this is an opportunity my brother, yes, to you on the "Other Side". When moments like these present themselves, we should grab them and therefore the next 50 in the pre-primary schools and the primary schools, that would be a message in my view, a gesture that would have a significant impact.

Just to come back to the aspect of transport, because it is something that is dear to Labour. It is dear to Labour. As much as we commend and we have to commend that initiative to try to address the school children, I've heard about the elderly, which we would compliment, but I would love to see a more urgent focus.

Because this Administration has demonstrated that if it wants to start that train, regardless of what we say, it will roll. I am sure an initiative to address the national transport issue for workers will assist the private sector, and I call upon the private sector to also take that initiative to assist in addressing the issue of transportation. Thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator André Lewis. Senator the Honourable Norlan Cox, you have the floor, Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Let me take this opportunity to extend New Year greetings to my colleagues. I just have two questions for Senator Andrew regarding his presentation; if he can give me some feedback on that.

The first one is a comment and question on Monroe University. I wanted to find out whether or not it's straight scholarships or scholarships through sports. Because I know we do have some historical relationship with them, where they were offering sports scholarships to Grenadians. Sometime back, when I was the Minister for Sports, I did

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have an opportunity to tour the university a couple of years ago, and we do have a great relationship with them, and one of the things is that they were very attracted towards some of our athletes and sports personnel from Grenada. We were working on an MoU to have a number of students every year go to their university, once those requirements were met. So I wanted to find out if those scholarships were just pure scholarships for education, or if it was just for sports? That is one of the questions.

The next question was on the Spice Bus initiative. There was a mention of a partnership with the private sector. I know that was some of the things that were discussed, and also you did make mention of it, the possibility of the senior citizens, especially the persons who use wheelchairs and things like that, to provide some support to them in that regard. I wanted to find out if you have any details on the nature of the partnership with the private sector... What would the person expect if they were driving, and who would be maintaining... If you have those details, I think that would be critical towards how that service is. If you don't at this time... I just think it's important. What is the nature or details surrounding that partnership with the Government and the private sector? Thank you very much, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. So I can't tell you I have on the last question first, Spice Bus. I can't tell you I have all of the details as to what the terms of reference are and would be, that reside mostly with the ministry's Department of Transportation. So I don't have all of the details. But to know that we have collaborated to provide the information from an education point of view to ensure that the partnership happens, but we can find the information from the Ministry of Transportation in terms of what exactly the terms of reference are with the local bus owners, but that I don't have at the moment.

In terms of the scholarships. Yes, it is straight scholarships. You may find

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somebody who is good at sports, I think the overarching criteria here is that there must be a “first-generationer”. The first person in their family who is going to go to a university and who meets the criteria for acceptance for the university, and once those are met, they can be eligible and probably can be selected in any cohort of 50. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Andrew. I believe this brings us to the end of Ministerial Statements. I want to thank all the ministers and their teams who have done the work to make those achievements so that they can be reported here for the public and for the Senate itself. Thank you again. Thank you all.

- Deputy Clerk:**
- Item 8 – Presentation of Papers and Reports from Select Committees.
  - Item 9 – Petitions.
  - Item 10 – Government Notices.
  - Item 11 – Unofficial Notices.
  - Item 12 – Questions.
  - Item 13 – Personal Explanations.

**Madam President:** Senator André Lewis.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you, Madam President. I find it's becoming sort of regular for me to be standing on the same issue, Standing Orders No. 7 - Duties of the Clerk on the aspect of notice of meetings. It is absolutely clear. We addressed this matter before, and a commitment was given to us that the rule would be observed; the six days' clear notice.

The notice of this meeting came to my attention on Friday, the 31st, but it came to my inbox on the 30th. So I am saying when I look at the date on my email, I saw it on the 31st, but I will say, when I double check the date, it came out on the 30th. But even if we

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do that, today, Tuesday, certainly is not six clear days. Why am I making an issue of this again?

It is not just that I am a stickler for rules, because I think that rules are there. Yes. There are times when there would be understanding that something is required to have a little tweaking, and I think we could all understand that. It has happened in the past. I haven't raised it. I've raised it now. I'll raise it again. What this does is that it impacts negatively our ability, my ability to prepare, to give due representation to the people that we represent. As I said, the Bills that are before us are not standard. In other words, the other aspects of the agenda are standard and will come.

I am yet to see, unless there is something that I am missing, what was the urgency of a two-day or three-day difference? When taking into account... I am expecting the Clerk... This is under the duties of the Clerk. He is my good colleague, more than my colleague, but this is not about you and me, through you, Madam President, because here it speaks about the duties of the Clerk. So I am not importing an office.

I am dealing with what the rules are saying so much so that when sending out the Bills to some of my colleagues, I go to different areas to get some advice, up to today people were trying to reach me to raise certain concerns, ask certain questions for clarity on the Bill, but I am not in a position to address it. Now, it may be the trade unionist in us for those of us who struggle.

I am not saying it will lead us to not coming here if the notice is not kept, but it forces one to consider what is to be done. I am making a request again. This ought not to be a contentious issue. I am making a request again through you, Madam President, that we try as much as is possible, and I am saying try because I do agree that there may be times that something may pop up.

The international community may send something to us on short notice, and we have to rush and do it. As much as we come here, and we all lament the fact that we are independent and we can do and say what we want, but we know how this thing works. I could understand that. But in normal circumstances, I think today is, I think we ought to do better.

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Also, as I am on this. I think it is also important, because Bills like these, especially when you don't give the notice, it is not a way out. It is not always necessary for us to go through all of the stages in some of these Bills. Give us an opportunity to discuss, to get some feedback, to go back and to come back. So I am placing this on the table as number one under Personal Explanations.

There is a second matter that is a serious concern to me. I will do the research and come back to this House, but I am placing it on the table. While I was opening my personal computer this morning to follow up on some matters relative to what I am doing here, it just dawned on me that I should sort of close my computer because I don't know if there is anybody behind me or so who may be looking or copying what I am doing. I don't know. I don't have an answer if this is permitted or not.

I am aware. I have seen some things and I have heard about issues that may be taken from the "Other Place" in this House of devices being used, and the content of the device in this House may be out in the public. I am saying that. I'm just putting that here. I am researching the matter further, because while I was opening this...

Because this here, and I am sure we all do this, Madam President... As I said, I don't have the answer. I don't know what the implications are. I don't know if it is permitted. I don't know... No. I'm just saying I don't know. Right, so I do not wish to make a pronouncement as yet. I am seeking some advice and guidance on it because it can apply to any one of us.

Even if it may come from different sides, there can be people behind us who are from different sides, but in this House, we are all on one side in the sense that it is the people's business. I wish to feel comfortable. As I said, if it is okay, then it's okay, but I am researching it. Yes. So I wanted to place that here to let the House know there is a matter I would research further and come back to the House based on my findings. Whether or not there is an aspect of privilege inside here for us as Parliamentarians. Whether or not there are privileges. Whether or not there is the aspect of the possibility of contempt. I don't know. I am just throwing this out because I am searching.

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**Madam President:** Senator André Lewis, thank you. What is the specific concern you are raising concerning the computer?

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Yes. It is apparent that the documents or items used by a parliamentarian from the “Other Place”, I’m saying, may have been photographed or copied or videotaped, for want of a better word, and it is being distributed to the public from sitting in Parliament.

I am saying that if this is the case, I do not know what is permitted and what is not permitted, but I would research the matter. What I do know is that it may raise a certain level of discomfort. I am not asking for guidance on the matter at the moment. I am just drawing this to the attention that, based on what I have seen outside, what has been brought to my attention...

I know these are the days of AI and everything else. Yes. These are the days of AI and everything else. But I have become aware of this, and as I opened my computer this morning, it dawned on me to look back or to probably look up. I don’t know. I think we could all say that there are times when we may have things on our system related to what we are doing here, but we may not necessarily want to bring out our source. Are you following me? And therefore, it is cause for serious concern as a start, but I would research the matter and address it further based on my findings. Thank you very much.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. On the two matters raised, the timely circulation of documents consistent with the Standing Orders and your information security concern, we will take that up following the meeting. Thank you. Senator Rahaman.

**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Madam President. Two issues, first, I would like to associate myself with the comments of my colleague Senator Lewis with regard to the emails and notifications in a timely manner. It is my intention to read and to understand. Legal language is not the easiest. I'm sure we would appreciate that to

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understand, and we need time to share information and to get feedback from our respective associations, areas of interest, and so we can do what is required of us in "This House".

As a case in point, I missed a committee meeting because I had two days' notice via email, and I don't want that to be repeated because I didn't have enough time, and I don't want that to be repeated again. So I would like to have at least one working week or whatever the norm is, if Senator Lewis says it's six days, so that we can ensure that the committees and the legislation that comes before us, we give it due care and attention that is required of us.

Secondly, I would like to use this opportunity to touch on some current events that are happening in the world today, particularly in the United States under the new administration and the effect that that can have on the cost of goods that we import.

Recently, tariffs have been placed on Canada, Mexico, and China, thus far and from media reports, it is coming for the European Union, 25% in many cases on those countries. What that means is that those countries will answer back. We have already seen a tit for tat type of relationship, type of response which is not good for business and international trade and free trading. And so because a lot of what is manufactured in the Far East comes through North America, if there are 25% tariffs imposed on goods from China coming through North America for small businesses not only in Grenada, but throughout the Caribbean, you can only imagine the compounding effect that, that will have on the cost here.

Now, in the short term, we are helpless; in the long term, we are not because there are other markets we can source from, but that takes time, and so I want to use this opportunity to mention to businesses, pay attention to what is going on now, this is unprecedented. We don't know how far-reaching these tariffs will be, but they are unnatural and they definitely have implications for us as small island states.

It is also something for Government, not only businesses to look at, but for Government to look at in the upcoming budget and to see. You know, God Almighty works in mysterious ways, and perhaps that delayed budget date can be of benefit to us

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because we have the advantage of seeing what is being played out and how it can possibly affect us and what measures we can take. So all of these things are unfolding, but it is important to pay attention to those trends.

And those of you who may not have had the opportunity to look at the Beyond the Headlines Programme, just to give you an a little insight into some of what's taking place, please do so, read up on it and make sure that you understand how this can impact your business and plan so that you're not caught off guard and you can look into other supply chains or other areas so that your business is not caught off guard and you become uncompetitive. So those are just the two that I just wanted to touch on. I thank you.

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Rahman, for your comments, and again I undertake to look into the matter of short notices, whether for committee or full sitting. Thank you. Senator Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Having the privilege at times of occupying the Presiding Chair as the Deputy President and being on the floor, I wanted to offer a suggestion that may help address the issue of documents coming late or too early, whatever the case may be.

Is it possible that documents can be sent together when documents are going out for the House of Representatives? If so, we know that there are some Bills that are not destined for the Senate; those can be omitted. If there are changes after sitting in the Senate, those amendments can be made, and the documents can be resent. I think that would give us a clearer advantage if documents could be sent at the same time when they are sent to Members of the House of Representatives. I think that can help resolve that. That's just an offer, a suggestion in that regard. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Cox. We have, in fact, experimented with that. I know that on occasion, we have sent out documents that are destined for the House. By law, of the Standing Committee, we are not supposed to send them until they

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have come through the House, but to avoid this particular challenge, it has been considered on occasion. I am not sure if the Clerk wishes to elaborate on this or we will go back to the drawing board and take a look at the record because as I said we've used both systems; we've sent out at the same time that it is going to that "Other Place" and we have waited until it has come through the "Other Place" and then send them out.

So it requires a conversation between several stakeholders in this process, and I undertake to do so. I don't see the Clerk vigorously asking for the floor right now. I think he is holding his peace until we meet. Looks like he is going to speak. No, he is not going to speak. Senator St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. I find it is important for the records to associate myself with the repeated matter again. Again, it places persons like myself, Senator Rahaman and Senator Lewis in a more complicated further disadvantage because we are not in the wheels of the Lower House as we may speak. Meaning that, at least the opposition component, "This Side", has connections, and, of course, the "Government Side" of the Senate has connections. So it aggravates the matter even more. You know.

**Madam President:** Is that a suggestion, then, that you should be in one of those organisations? **(Laughter)** Couldn't resist.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you for the blessings. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. One of those, that's the question. But it's a... Until it really becomes a contentious issue, you may realise how serious it is down the road, constitutionally and otherwise.

Coming back to the point of the rush. I don't think the Government gets up and drinks a cup of coffee and says, let's just come with this Bill tomorrow. I don't think this is the case. We need to look at the time, and I think it is part of the democratic process. Is there an urgency that it must happen in the morning? We don't think so. So I stand

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here to support this point.

In fact you would very well know at our Standing Orders Committee meeting, this matter was raised and we had some discussion and we really agree with you looking to see how best we could have more participation through this approach because you get more persons to get more comments, you can have more time to review and at the end of the day get a better product. I think that is what we are all aiming to achieve. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator St. Clair, thank you. Thank you all, we now move to Item 14.

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 14 – Motions.

Item 15 – Bills.

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business in the Senate. Honourable Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Water Resources Management and Regulation Bill, 2025.

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to provide an institutional framework for the sustainable management, conservation, controlled allocation, development, use and regulation of the water resources in the State of Grenada, shortly entitled, Water Resources Management and Regulation Bill, 2025.

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant

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Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the second reading of the Bill be taken.

**Question proposed.**

**Madam President:** Senator Thomas

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, today more than ever with all issues of climate change in the world and the impact it is having on our society and as water can be recorded as maybe the most important resource and this planet, I think the time is come when mankind must recognise and must to the conclusion this is a natural resource. Water is a natural resource that cannot be taken for granted.

There is empirical data which indicates that in many parts of the world, people have difficulties in obtaining water, and even the little that they have, they have difficulties in sustaining it. And therefore, Grenada as a country, as a state, has the responsibility of ensuring that we manage this natural resource in a way that will have sufficient, in a way we will make it sustainable for future generations and in a way we will provide our citizens with quality and quantity.

And therefore, Madam President, this important Bill seeks to provide an institutional framework for the sustainable management. On a daily basis, I read and I cannot remember not coming across the word sustainable in every aspect of life.

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Conservation, controlled allocation, so very important especially when you are living in an environment like Grenada with hills and valleys and when I say hills and valleys, many people listening to this presentation today here and online will be able to nod their heads and say, yes, I have difficulties in getting water on top of this hill, or I don't get on a regular basis, or I don't get when my colleagues are using water at peak hours, especially in the morning and evening. Development, Madam President, use and regulations of water resources in the State of Grenada by establishing a National Water Resources Management Unit. That is the approach this Bill is taking, Madam President, and we on "This Side" of the House fully endorse it.

Madam President, as we proceed to set up this framework, I will present this Bill in six Parts, which contain 56 clauses. Part I, Madam President, contains four clauses and basically it deals with the commencement, the implementation, definitions and the objective of the Bill, which I would like to read, Madam President.

In Part I, clause 3 sets out the objectives of the Bill, which are to ensure that the state water resources are managed, developed, protected, conserved, allocated and used in a manner that is conducive to the fundamental principles set out in clause 5. Very, very important, and that's why the term "sustainable" is so important, Madam President.

Madam President, under Part I, it also sets out the declared policy concerning the management of water to ensure the orderly and coordinated development and use of the state's water resources to conserve and protect. Madam President, the Bill calls, in this Part, for the Minister to promote and develop a national policy, for the Minister to discharge functions relating to the provision of water supplies, including augmentation, distribution and proper use of natural resources.

As we move on, Madam President, Part II provides for water resource management and administration. This Part contains nine clauses which deal with the fundamental principles governing the management of water resources; the promotion of a master plan to be developed with respect to the management of water resources; the establishment of the Water Management Unit, and I would like to emphasise, with sufficient independence and autonomy. I repeat, with sufficient independence and

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autonomy to effectively carry out its functions. This is so important, Madam President.

One may have wanted to come to the conclusion, well, the Ministry of Infrastructure cannot take control of that. NAWASA is already there. Madam President, we believe that this is so important that it deserves to have an entity of its own that can focus and concentrate on the management of this natural resource. While other entities will take on the responsibility of distributing supplies.

Madam President, the unit shall be under the portfolio of the Minister responsible for Public Utilities, and the Director shall be the principal advisor to the Government on all matters about managing our natural resources.

Under Part II, Madam President, it further entails the functions of the unit. Preparation of a master plan, and most importantly, deals with the revenue of the unit.

Madam President, in Part III, which contains 10 clauses, this part deals basically with water quality and quantity management. Very, very important. Madam President, in the definition that "This House" has, and it will soon be available to the public, there is a term that we use, and it is in this document called "gathering grounds". Under Part III, clause 14 declares gathering grounds, all areas of land on which water is collected for water works and which are declared to be a protected forest or protected reserve under the Forest, Soil and Water Conservation Act, "Gathering grounds".

This Part, Madam President, also speaks about the environmental flow level, and clause 16 under Part III provides for the environmental flow levels of volume of water resources. It mandates the Director to specify where it is appropriate to do so after consulting with the Commission and the appropriate authority, the environmental flow or volume of any water resource, taking into consideration any relevant use of water.

Clause 18, Madam President, mandates the authority in collaboration with appropriate authorities to:

- (a) recommend to the Bureau of Standards, and we are all familiar with the Bureau of Standards and the role that it plays in measuring quality and standards of many different things in this country; and
- (b) monitor the water resource quality and prevent and control the pollution of water

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resources.

Under Part III, Madam President, clause 19 states clearly. It empowers the Minister, acting on the advice of the management unit, to declare by notice an area as a water management area to protect any water resources, watershed, environment or ecosystem at risk of depletion, contamination, extinction or disturbance from any source, including aquatic and terrestrial weeds. Madam President, the power cannot be exercised without giving the owner of any land within the proposed water management area the opportunity to make representations regarding the need for the water management area.

I think it is quite clear because some people in the public may be wondering, well, if this land belongs to me, and I own this land, I have full authority over it. The direction in which this Bill is going, Madam President, is that all water resources will be under this unit, irrespective of public or private.

Madam President, it goes on to say, where an area is declared a water management area, persons are prohibited from undertaking any activity in the area that impairs or conflicts with the purpose of the declaration. It allows the Minister, acting on the advice of the unit, by notice published in the *Gazette*, to:-

- (a) amend the geographic boundaries of a water management area, or any prohibition or limitation applicable to the area, if circumstances in respect of the area change are so required; or

Madam President, it goes on to say,

- (b) the Minister can withdraw a declaration of a water management area, if the circumstances under which the declaration was made no longer exist.

So nothing is cast in concrete, Madam President. We can move accordingly. We can make necessary moves according to circumstances.

This section, Madam President, goes on to talk about, clause 22, an offence can be created, Madam President, for polluting any water resource for which the unit may issue an order for the person to take certain measures. Contamination and pollution cannot all happen by accident. We are human beings. We can have a dialogue. We can

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sit down and have a chat, but the unit would be very concerned about any action or inaction that can lead to contamination or pollution of water.

Madam President, Part IV provides for abstraction of water, and this one, Madam President, is very, very important. According to the definition presented here, abstraction means the process by which water in its natural environment may be artificially removed through a manmade structure or through the process of changing the flow of the water from its usual course to another course.

I remember as a young man going to the river, we used to block higher up in the river to make sure that our catch below was very fruitful. If you want two buckets of crayfish, then you know what to do, and I remember also that people have their free will to divert the mouth of a river based on what they foresee individually or unilaterally as their means of development, construction or whatever they want to construct lower down the road. So they may create some arteries, tributaries to move the river or the flow in a different direction.

This Bill, Madam President, seeks to avoid those things from happening, and anyone who wants to get involved at any level in creating some form of abstraction, the Bill provides for us to sit down, have a dialogue, make applications, obtain our licence, get permission and move on. And so, Part IV contains 16 clauses dealing with all those things, Madam President.

There is a provision that the owner of the land and the family and employees of the owner shall be entitled to abstract and use any water within the boundary of the land for domestic use on condition that the abstraction does not compromise the quality and quantity of water. Very, very important, Madam President. And as I said, the process is there, applications, licences, permits, fees and all the likes and obviously recommendations are made by the unit to the Minister who has the responsibility for making that very important decision. One can be refused; one can be given permission.

Madam President, Part V of the Bill contains 13 clauses and provides for water and waste control areas and permits. In one of the clauses, clause 42, it empowers the Commission, on the advice of the units, to regulate the discharge of wastes or classes of

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waste, to protect the water resources from pollution or reduction in water quality. Very, very important, Madam President.

Our action and inaction in an area designated as a very important water resource, as an individual, your action and inaction can hamper and create an impact and affect a whole population in your community. And therefore, this Bill puts the system in place to ensure that whatever you do, it will create, in terms of discharging of waste and classes of waste that will affect the water resources in the area, this Bill will take care of that.

Clause 43 prohibits the use of water in a water-controlled area or the discharge of waste or a class of waste in a waste-controlled area, except that it is done in accordance with the permit granted for that purpose. Again, Madam President, we want people not to work on their own, in their own interest, but to work in the interest of society, in the interest of the community. And therefore, nothing is wrong and finding out from the authority what you can do and what you should not do. And that is the direction of this Bill, Madam President.

Clause 44 provides for the right to obtain permits. This applied to persons who have been using water, in a water control area for a continuous period for at least 24 months immediately before the appointed day, and shall, be entitled to an application made to the unit within six months of the appointed day, granted of a permit for a period which expires one year after the appointed date; which is reasonable, Madam President.

Madam President, the final Part of the Bill, Part VI, provides for appeal and miscellaneous provisions. Madam President, within Part VI, clause 54, Madam President, establishes an Appeals Tribunal for hearing and deciding appeals on matters referred to it. The Tribunal, Madam President, may—

- (a) dismiss the appeal and confirm the decision of the authority;
- (b) allow the appeal and set aside the decision;
- (c) vary the decision; or
- (d) allow the appeal and direct that the matter, the subject of the appeal, be determined anew by the unit or the Minister.

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Madam President, today is a very, very important day. I think that Grenada is heading in the right direction, when we have come to the conclusion that managing this very important natural resource, which we all cannot do without on a daily basis. I believe that the people of this country would be very, very impressed that a system of that nature and a framework of that nature is being put in place to ensure that we have sufficient for today, and we have sufficient for the generations to come.

Madam President, I commend this Bill to the House, and I rest my case.  
**(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Thomas, for your summation of the Bill. Senator Dwight Horsford, your light is on? You have the floor, sir.

**Sen. the Hon. Dwight Horsford:** Thank you, Madam President. And allow me to take the opportunity now, as I rise in a very brief contribution to this Bill, to firstly wish all my colleagues, your good self and the staff of the Parliament, my best wishes for a productive 2025.

Consistent with my promise, Madam President, my contribution is staggeringly brief. I have read the Bill and let me say immediately that the objects and purposes of the Bill, are commendable, certainly the context in which the Bill comes, with all the climate change and the emerging new best practices to suit the times are to deal with the most critical, or should I say the most vital resource we have on earth.

In fact, some predict and some surmise that it is very probable within the next 15 to 20 years, conflict between nations in certain parts of the world, will centre around water, the availability of water and the ability to harvest water to supply the human needs of some of the world's peoples.

But, Madam President, I hope I'm forgiven, but I do share the sentiments expressed earlier by some of my colleagues on "This Side" of the Chamber, in relation to the alacrity with which this measure. Albeit a good measure, its contents and objectives, I personally indicated earlier that we do not oppose. I do not oppose it at all. But the

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effect of this measure is far-reaching, and it contains provisions and mechanisms for extraordinary and sweeping power, even in relation to water on private property and how that water can be harvested and used.

So my colleagues on “This Side”, I think, are right in saying that we should be a little bit more measured so that fulsome discussion can be had on this very comprehensive legislative measure, some 56 clauses of it. We’re not saying don’t pass it, but as my distinguished friend to my extreme left said, “If there is no pressing necessity or urgency to process, as it is intended and apparently undertaken, allow more discussion and allow colleague on “This Side”, some more time for deliberation on its provision.

I fear that I’m increasingly forming the view that it is the thinking of some of my colleagues that our Parliamentary exercise is a perfunctory one. It is not. I regret if that’s the thinking. It’s a misfortune. The rules of our parliamentary process allow for order and for the majority to carry the day and make decisions, but emphatically, it recognises that there must be deliberation and discussion, because all parties here, all Members are equal standing. And in order for our legislative measure to be more fully informed, in its content so that it better meets its purpose, Members must have the greatest opportunity to deliberate on it.

So I just wanted to say that, Madam President, because I understand where my distinguished friends are coming from. I may... I do not always. I do not always do. But I may have, like my distinguished friend the Attorney General, because of our profession and training, we may have an advantage here, digesting these things in very short order, but not so, particularly when this is a novel move. Because the effect of this is total control now by the Central Government of this vital resource.

I appreciate that there is a mechanism for technical advice to be in place before certain powers can be exercised, but some of us know very well that, in real terms, these can be nothing more than a device that masks direct executive prerogative.

So, Madam President, I wish only to add these brief remarks. Commendable Bill. I understand its objects, and it may be necessary in this emerging world and context to do so, but its far reaching effects, I think we should at least not rush to all stages today,

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but certainly after the second reading allow colleagues, certainly on “This Side”, to have amongst and between us, some more discussion on aspects of the Bill. I thank you very much for the opportunity to say these things. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator Horsford, for your intervention. Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to give my support to the Bill, as presented by the Leader of Government's Business. I think this Bill is timely, if not too late, but it's never too late as long as we have life. So, I think it's timely.

We would recall that just, probably over six, eight months ago, we were struggling with a severe drought, where across the entire nation, there were concerns about whether or not we would be able to have water, the load... I said load shedding. I think that's the wrong term; that's electricity we're talking about. **(Laughter)** It's one of the utilities anyhow. But having to restrict the supply in different communities, some communities have to depend on NAWASA's trucks.

I remember colleagues way in the south, complaining, even persons at the St. George's University and other business persons finding it a very serious issue, affecting the potential for business. And I'm sure the Senator for Business could attest to that. It has been a very concerning issue, the supply of water, in that period to the south of the island. And so it points to the gravity of the challenge we can have, or we have had, with water at some point.

And we have to acknowledge that the management of Grenada's water resource is, in and of itself, a separate function, compared to the treatment, storage and distribution of water; let alone treating with sewerage, hard water, greywater, and all of those. And so, Madam President, when we think that all of those functions were expected to be delivered by the National Water and Sewerage Authority, we could understand why in an bout of rain, like we have had in several of the months last year, it becomes a real

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challenge for them, just to maintain their dams, broken pipes, all of these things, while you manage the overarching water resource.

And it's in that context that I am happy to support this Bill, because I believe that streamlining the functions to ensure that there is a separate authority, a commission to manage the water resource... In fact, one could argue that there is somewhat... There could potentially be a conflict, or almost a conflict of interest, when NAWASA manages the water resource and still has to distribute it. I'm not saying there is, but one could potentially argue.

But streamlining the functions, Madam President, and ensuring that there's a separate authority to manage the water resource of the state, allows, in my mind, for greater efficiency, both in terms of the water resource management, and it gives NAWASA, which would still have its function for treating and distributing, the opportunity to increase its efficiency in the discharge of its own functions. And so, from that point of view, I strongly support the Bill as presented by the Leader of Government's Business. Thank you very much. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Andrew. Thank you for your distinction between the two agencies. I offer the floor to Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph. Could you... You were waving? No? **(Laughter)** All right. Maybe you were waving at Sen... Yes, back and forth. Maybe you were waving at Senator André Lewis...

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Thank you very much, Madam President.

**Madam President:** ...who is now offered the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** We would not try what was tried on us a few sessions ago, when they were waiting for us to speak one after the other on "This Side", although we interchange, we maintain principle. Thank you very much.

Madam President, the matter before us is an extremely important one. As a matter

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of fact, the labour movement has been involved in discussions on this matter with the engineers who were consulted to address this matter, regarding water management. But, I wish to make a distinction, which Senator Andrew has addressed, between management and regulation. Yes?

In this context, just, just briefly... In terms of an overarching concern or just observations and or questions... The role to be played in terms of the service regulations under PURC, so much as it is commendable and is the way to go, the question that we have and the workers will have, an I'll expand on this in a moment, is whether or not NAWASA currently have systems in place to improve the quality of service that they deliver. Because remember, the PURC is now the regulatory authority where complaints and everything will be made.

So what we can see happening, remember, Senator Andrew, the example that you used, my brother, and you're absolutely correct. The recent challenges that we had in the dry and wet season were because if there is too much rain, the water goes. If it is the dry season, it doesn't have water. Right? But more than that, I am sure that the images are still etched in our memory, in our mind, of the sacrifices, exposure to danger that our NAWASA colleagues had to trek through hills and valleys, precipices, landslides, to restore water even without the PURC coming down on them.

In other words, the importance of that system. We know GRENLEC is under PURC. We know that the telecoms are now under, but it is also interesting to note that NAWASA as a company, has not had the experiences of significant investments that the two companies that I spoke about, because of the involvement of private investors, those who raped and plundered our resources, like the Cable and Wirelasses and them, for years. Right? And the WRB, right, where all our profits were taken away.

Because it is much more expensive to produce water, to bring portable water to our homes, based on our topography and everything else that we are struggling with. And we foresee that there will be tremendous pressure being placed on the workers and the company. I was specifically focusing on the workers, the company. At the moment we do not have the necessary investments in the infrastructure that is required within

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NAWASA.

I know there is the GIZ issue with the Germans that we have been speaking about for years. Totally aware of this. Totally aware of what needs to be done from Concord to the south. Totally aware of this. But just as we speak of the psychological pressure, and let me clearly state, this is not to say that we are not interested in lifting the standard of our workers and what they do, because no one can doubt the commitment of these workers. You will not expose yourself to the threats and dangers that are out there unless you are serious about your work.

And they have left their families during the hurricane... During even... I know colleagues because they are unionised and we interact, and I know the sacrifices that they make. I know the sacrifices that their families make. But when we do what we do now, as much as we support it, it is just a matter of order, order, one before the other, the cart before the horse, or so, what we're addressing. We see the potential for tremendous pressure to be placed on the workers, because at the moment we can hear it in the call-in programmes, the complaints that come against NAWASA, we see it on social media, and it's quite understandable.

Because I hear my colleague Senator Horsford speak about it, it is said that in the next ten, 20 or 25 years, conflicts of nations may be influenced by the scarce water resources. But I wish to... If I could use your legal term. I wish to posit, that it has already been said and proven that conflicts in the Middle East, especially between Israel and the Palestinians, right, is heavily influenced by the aspect of water, the higher end, and who dam off and take of water, and cut off water from certain areas, because we know the challenges in that, that desert area.

So the aspect of water management is extremely important. And as the presenter of the Bill, indicated that, you know, growing up in the villages, you know, we'll block off water for whatever reason, but it is worse than that. And why do we support the management of water? Because there are incidents between farmers that have led to certain reactions that may have involved the court, where, how do you determine or regulate which is important? What amount of water should this farmer use, and at what

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time should he or she not use it? And I expect and I know that my colleague Senator Roderick will develop on a number of those things.

So, this is not... As a matter of fact, I do not see this as a contentious issue. I keep raising these issues, and that's why it's important for us to be able to discuss those things in an open manner.

So the concern from the workers and from us, as the representative, the unions as representing workers, is the implications that now the establishment of having the regulatory arm in effect, extant from NAWASA, which is desirable, but probably not at this moment.

Because we do know that under the GIZ discussion, what we were exposes to with the aspect of the management of the water, in terms of shifting the unit, yes, shifting the unit, because a unit has been or will be set up or has been set up, removed from under the direct control of NAWASA, to address those issues.

The abstraction of water, because there will be a fee. There will be a fee. I don't know if I missed it, and the other colleagues who may have observed it, if I missed it, might be able to assist me, but I've not yet seen a structure of how the fees will be determined. Now remember, these fees will be passed on, or they can impact all consumers. It can impact... that's mine?

Okay, I can't find... okay. There will be the farmers—a fee for the farmers. There'll be a fee for consumers. And the concern that one will also have is what fees the end user, the thousands of people, will have to pay. How will that impact the different households?

Left up to me, and that's, I hardly do that, but I have always felt that everybody should have access to water. I'm not saying, probably, and I'm not saying it should be free, I grew up, probably grew up in the days when we grew up in the village of La Digue, where we had access to water. Right? The rivers are no longer rivers, but are streams. In some instances, they are struggling to even survive due to the impact of climate change. So, we understand the need for that.

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But in my support or commendation of the Bill, I could not have seen an explanation or the mechanism, and for the determination of the extraction fee and how it will be pawned out to the users.

So, also the fact that I think the regulatory component would be placed under the Ministry of Agriculture. Am I correct? No? But it... It may be placed under a ministry.

**(Inaudible comment by a Member)**

**Sen. the Hon. Mondy André Lewis:** Right, Infrastructure. Probably I'm just saying agriculture, but it's a ministry... and so that would be important, that will be important in terms of its independence. Right, dependency etcetera, because water is too important to get it wrong. Because it is okay to have the structures. It's okay to have the laws, as this Bill goes into an Act and becomes a law. But if we do not simultaneously, because we are where we are, I do not expect that the Government will put this on hold and say, let us now go back and upgrade NAWASA infrastructure. Let's not be unrealistic here. Almost simultaneously...

Because when we do this, hear what will happen. As we all, and especially the "Government Side", are praising this Bill, in terms of it addressing the challenges that we saw last year, because that's what came across. I take that as one of the things that will come across. If this does not materialise, and I hope it materialises, but we know it is the infrastructural development. It is not just the regulations. It's not just the regulatory authority, because you can regulate as much as you want. If the infrastructure is not there... If the storage is not there, even if the water is under the ground, and there is water under the ground, but if we can't get it to the homes or where it is required, I can see a bigger and stronger outcry from the population and rightly so.

But I'm also aware that it is our workers who have already been burdened and stretched, once they wear a NAWASA uniform, and even when they take off that NAWASA uniform, they will be the sounding board, because it happens in other utilities. Those are us who worked in other places, and you worked in other utilities, whether you

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are a technician or not, if your service is not working, when the customer meets you, it's you they're quarrelling with, you know.

So, I'm making this request through you, Madam President. Labour is making that request on behalf of the workers, on behalf of the workers, and there's no denying the commitment of NAWASA workers. They deal with NAWASA. They deal with NAWASA.

To assist them in doing their work better, to some extent, the regulatory arm under PURC will now be getting direct complaints from the public and will be making demands of the company, and most likely, there will be a hearing. I don't think that, I don't think that having a regulatory authority in place and all that customers expect is just to be able to call, and there's just a replacement for NAWASA, and nothing happens.

I mean, people will say okay, but it is NAWASA I'm complaining to. So I could understand that conflict, potential conflict, Senator Andrew. I could understand that. For that, the PURC Committee needs to feel a sense of achievement and to feel that they are doing something. I am hoping that discussions were held with them. I'm hoping that they were able to explore their readiness for these matters. So that's just the overarching comments.

I just have two issues specifically that I wish... Under section 18. I say we didn't have much time, but we are where we are. Under section 18, under ambient standards, it says water resource quality, and monitoring and pollution control. That has to do with the Bureau of Standards; the ambient standards. Strong implementation is required here by the unit. This would require adequate and quality staff to carry out inspections of swimming pools at hotels, etcetera. Yes?

A clear rule must be given to the Bureau of Standards to ensure compliance with regional CARICOM and international standards. A question that comes from me is, what capacity exists now to staff the unit? I know that there is a lot of potential. In other words, things can be put in place, but I'm asking, what standards, because we need to ensure that these are there.

Under the revenue unit, that's 11 (1). For proper discharge of its function, the funds and resources of the unit shall consist of—

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- (a) such sums allocated annually for the purpose in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure; and
- (b) all other sums or property, which may in any manner become payable to or vested in the unit, in respect of any matter incidental to its functions.

It's just a comment. Just a comment. The unit would increase government expenditure and, without any clear source of revenue outside of the consolidated fund, could have negative fiscal implications. If the unit is placed under the PRC, then there will be efficiency gains through the spreading of administrative costs and other costs. So, it's just an observation and a comment for consideration.

Under consumer protection, and I know that a lot of efforts have been made or intentions declared about the Consumer Protection Unit, which is under my colleague here. Just a comment. We have not seen it. It's possible, it's there. As I said, it's possible one may have missed it. We have not seen where consumer interest is addressed, and any procedures for handling consumer complaints. So that was in our review, we have not seen that. It is possible it is there, and if it is there, we wish to be pointed in that direction.

So, Madam President, in keeping with what was said by, I think Senator Dwight, placed it perfectly, placed it perfectly well. The objectives are clear. It must be commended. It is a discussion that has been taking place, in terms of the management, because I know that there were two of Grenada's better engineers, along that line, engaged in discussions throughout the state for the past few years on the management aspect. Yes? And we were engaged, but we have raised these concerns, especially as it relates to the regulatory and the lack of... NAWASA, for whatever reason, the GIZ Programme may not have made that advance or been at that stage that was identified over the past years, in terms of NAWASA and upgrading its facilities.

So, Madam President, and to the colleagues and the "Other Side", therein lies some of our concerns, but we identify with the objective of the Bill, to ensure that our scarce resource is managed. And the fact that it has implications, so many implications for private owners...

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Lastly, Madam President, and it's something I'm sure that Senator David Andrew would easily identify with. For instance, there's a place, if we have to call it La Digue, in preference. Right? It has a tremendous number of natural springs. Yes. When growing up, you know, little springs... Yes? All over the place. This now is saying that all of these, although they're on private land, are not under the direct control or ownership of the state, which is a significant shift and therefore, it is important to ensure that our people understand and appreciate that, so that we can have a reduction in potential conflicts.

Because you know how it goes when you own a piece of land, that is my land, and you can't come on the land. Right? But you understand the importance of what is being attempted and with wider discussions, even after the passing of this Bill, because we are where we are, even after the passing of this Bill, public engagement and public education would be extremely important in making it, worth the while as what we are doing here. Thank you, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Lewis. Thank you. Senator Quinc Britton.

**Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton:** Thank you once again, Madam President. I, too, rise to give support to the Bill as presented by the Leader of Government's Business. Madam President, I think all of us here share the common goal or common understanding, or common support we should say for the Bill, Madam President. And in my understanding, Madam President, as I read the Bill, I see that the Bill seeks or ensures that Grenada's water resources are properly managed, protected and distributed, to support sustainability and as well as long-term access to clean water, Madam President.

And I heard the comments from the comrade, our Honourable Senator on the "Other Side", some of which the responsibility is just shifted, because as it stands right now, NAWASA has the authority, even if you have a spring in your land NAWASA has the authority to extract that raw water and treat it and so on. So it's just basically shifting

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the responsibility. And I came across this a couple of years ago when I used to work with NAWASA as a plant operator. So I have a pretty good appreciation as to...

**(Inaudible comments by a Member)**

**Sen. the Hon. Quinc Britton:** ... Pardon me? **(Laughter)** I was a contract worker. **(Laughter) (Applause)** Yes, so, Madam President, I have a better appreciation as to, you know, water and water conservation and so on. You see, Madam President, as climate change, Madam President, you see, we will be adversely affected. Hence, the reason why we are taking the initiative to make the necessary moves. What this Bill seeks to do, Madam President, is to basically assist NAWASA by providing a new oversight body, as a national water management unit, which will regulate and oversee the usage and conservation of water.

So NAWASA now would now focus primarily on providing water, treating water and so on, as well as water and sewerage services, while supporting the new unit. So, it would be like hand in glove, Madam President. So, two of them would be operating or functioning side by side.

As we speak, tomorrow, God's, will, we have the first under the G-CREWS Project, Madam President, the first storage tank will be commissioned at my parish, in Tufton Hall. This is a part of nine state-of-the-art storage tanks that will be constructed in strategic locations around the island, which will help in water conservation and all those things. So we have storage, so you don't have to suffer that much in the dry season.

And as part of that, Madam President, in St. Mark, 1568 household will be impacted by the commissioning of that facility. **(Applause)** They will be impacted in a positive way, Madam President, because as I mentioned before, I used to work as a plant operator with NAWASA and I always see... Well, we always boast in St. Mark of the abundance of water, but storage is something that we did not have. So now, you know, that's definitely, and we will be able to, maybe share some of the water that we have, might reach all the way up on your side up there, you know. **(Laughter)**

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So, the legislation also, Madam President, provides for a stronger regulation with the Public Utility Regulatory Commission, which will ensure transparency, fairness and efficiency in water management.

So, Madam President, as I said, I rise to give support and I encourage other Members to give support to this Bill. And if there are any, well, the recommendations and so on, we can always make the necessary changes as time goes along. But, I just render my support 100% to the Bill as presented. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Thank you. Senator Noland Cox.

**Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I rise to give my support to the intent and purposes of this Bill. Just to give some historical context, Madam President, this Bill is as a result of an important project that started a couple years ago, in terms of looking to fill the gaps where our water supply needs to be upgraded and improved, even the area in terms of St. Mark's and also the south, and also including Carriacou will be benefiting from that project as well. Madam President, in terms of the storage tanks, Carriacou will also see a couple of storage tanks installed in the not-too-distant future.

Madam President, as you know, with projects there are legal components, and hence, I guess, as much as the other two Bills that are before this House, as a consequence, amendments are made because of this Water Resource Management Bill.

But madam, there are some areas that I wanted to highlight, maybe to get some clarity and also the possibility of us looking further in terms of strengthening legislation going forward.

And the first one had to do and centres around the definition of abstraction as presented by the Bill. I think it was also raised by Senator Lewis under section 18, I think ambient control. It centres around rainwater harvesting.

I haven't noticed that the Bill speaks specifically to how rainwater harvesting is going to be treated, but in looking at the definition... If I should just read, Madam

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President, under interpretation, under the definition of what abstract means. It means, "The process by which water in its natural environment may be artificially removed through a manmade structure or through the process of changing the flow of the water from its usual course to another course".

I could easily say that a catchment can be deemed as something constructed to artificially remove water or collect water. So I just want to say for clarification and to avoid any ambiguity going forward in the case of the hotels, which also do rainwater harvesting, they do have a catchment. I know in terms of the control and the quality, it's important that that is addressed because you have guests staying there, but you also have private homes, more so, in the case of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, who harvest rainwater. How will that be treated? You know? Are they required to apply for an abstraction licence? I don't know.

So I think this is some clarity that I would hope that the legal department or the AG's Chambers can help us with, in terms of clarity. I think that is something very important. I just wanted to raise that, so that we won't have challenges.

One of the critical things, Madam President, is also the issue of operationalising this, this Bill. And you have a situation where you're moving from one entity to three entities now that will be dealing with the whole issue of water supply management and resources to the nation. And there's a likelihood of overlapping, in terms of responsibilities and in some cases, some entity may refuse to do certain things because they believe that is not their responsibility. So I think that is something, in terms of rolling out the regulations, we have to be very careful.

We don't want a situation where a client has an issue and goes to NAWASA, NAWASA then deflects to the water resource management unit, which may then deflect to the PURC, so I think there must be some clear responsibilities outlined, so that customers and residents can get the services as required.

Also, I just wanted clarification as well. Based on the new responsibilities of NAWASA, would it mean that NAWASA now has to also apply for an abstraction licence? I think that is what I'm seeing there. So I just wanted, just for clarification as well.

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And if that is the case, we don't want a situation where water is supposed to be NAWASA's responsibility for delivering, in terms of running the infrastructure, now we're saying that we cannot run pipe or we cannot run pipe or bring water to a particular area, because we're waiting now, we've been waiting how much weeks or how much months and the Water Resource Management Unit to get the license approved.

So we have to be very mindful of the possibilities, in terms of how that may affect services going forward. And I'm saying this, for us to just pay attention to it and to put measures in place to minimise that. We know how easy it is for one person to take the opportunity to blame somebody else for not doing his or her work when problems arise. So, I wanted to raise that, Madam President.

Another critical thing that I observed, and I stand corrected, if it's contained therein the Bill. In terms of how we treat with abstraction, in the case of emergencies, natural disasters, I haven't seen that. I think that there is a clear opportunity, in the case of a fire or a natural disaster, persons at that time may have a desire, as we may know, for water in case of emergencies.

So I think there should be some allowance there, something tied in there where the minister can say waive or over a period of time, so that persons can use water for domestic and other purposes, in case of natural disasters or in case of emergencies, because I have not seen that. I've somewhat perused the Bill, I believe, and I have not seen anything speaking towards that, or catering for that or for those purposes. So I wanted to flag that as an opportunity for us to improve the quality of the Bill, Madam President.

Another matter, I believe, may be intended to be in regulations, but that has to do it the whole issue of financial implications. I mean, of course, any new department, the Government will find ways to create revenue to finance that department, but I think maybe when we come up with the NAWASA Bill, that is something that I may flag. But maybe you can flag it here, or would even the Amendment Bill for the PURC. Because of how the PURC operates, it is expected that some fee be paid to the PURC on an annual basis, as per the entity that regulates that utility.

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And I believe that those fee may be contained and in the same way be treated with GRENLEC, which has to pay fees to PURC on an annual basis, or quarterly or monthly. And so, there is a likelihood, a strong likelihood that in National Water and Sewerage Authority we will now have to be paying some fees to the PURC.

I haven't seen any details in it here, but I believe the regulations will speak clearly to that. And the question is, where does that money come from, and if there is a likelihood sometime in the not-too-distant future that NAWASA, in turn, may look to extract those fees from its rate. So, that may be a consequence.

I'm not saying it in any negative way, because the intent of the Bill is to improve the service, improve the quality and the outlook where we're heading with our water resource and supply. But I'm just registering it, that there is a likelihood of cost implication for customers going forward, as regards NAWASA having to meet the fees for the PURC, in terms of the regulatory requirements.

So I just wanted to flag those as some issues or concerns for inclusion and for clarification. I just wanted to flag those. So, Madam President, with these contributions. I want to rest here, and if there are any others, I'll raise them as the other two Bills are presented. Thank you very much.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Cox. Senator Seville Francis.

**Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis:** Thank you, Madam President. And allow me the opportunity to say Happy New Year and prosperous New Year to all of my colleagues, including you, Madam President, and everyone within the hearing of my voice.

Allow me also to wish this beautiful tri-island state that I'm proud to be a part of, a Happy Independence. I am sure we will not have the opportunity to do so, in this space before Friday, February 7.

Madam President, I rise today to lend my support to my colleagues and to this Bill, brought before this Honourable House.

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Madam President, I got up this morning and I was not experiencing the best of health. And I must also apologise for my tardiness, which is also a cause of that. And I deliberated on either sending my apologies and my regrets for my absence, or coming here despite how I feel to lend my support, because I understand the importance of the nation's business.

And so, I chose to be here because I believe it is important, especially for our young people to have a voice and for their concerns to be aired in a space that is conducive for their development. And so, I strongly support the Bill brought before this Honourable House.

Because, Madam President, I believe it is critical to Grenada's future, especially for our young people whom I represent, the next 50, if we may refer to us as such. And I'm saying us, because I believe I will be here for the next 50. **(Laughter)** I'm not sure about anybody else. **(Laughter)** I believe I will be here for the next 50, Madam President, or it is my wish.

Madam President, this Bill is vital **(laughter)** to ensure the sustainable management and equitable distribution of Grenada's most precious resource, water. And I know growing up, and oftentimes we hear, in political speeches that our most precious resource in any society would be the people. But, Madam President, this morning I feel differently, and I'm saying that our most precious resource would be our water, because without the water we would not have the people and I'm also a living testimony of that.

I recall a couple years ago when we had that very severe drought. The heat was unbearable. I was visiting someone at the hospital, and before I got to the top of the long stairs, which we all are afraid to climb, I became a patient at the hospital where I was going to visit someone and part of the diagnosis was because I was severely dehydrated. Absence of water.

Madam President, so for me, I want us to understand and for the people to understand why this Bill matters. Because I don't believe we just woke up one day and decided to do this, there must...

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**Sergeant-at-Arms:** Deputy President in the Chair.

**Sen. the Hon. Seville Francis:** Deputy President, I believe that we have a reason for being here and not just because we're obligated to be here. So I want us to focus on why this Bill matters. Water is life, as mentioned previously, it is essential for our health, as also illustrated by my example of being admitted to the hospital because of dehydration. Our economy, as we can see before us, Deputy President, we have some very beautifully designed water bottles that I am sure contribute to our economic development in our country. This Bill establishes a structured approach to managing and conserving our water resources, ensuring that not just some citizen but every citizen, especially our young people in the rural communities, particularly those who utilise water for livelihood and for daily living, have reliable access to clean and safe water.

Deputy President, I recently had a walkthrough in my community in St. Patrick, and I was in deep conversation with one of the young men on the block, a very deep conversation that had me thinking. One of the things that he mentioned was, you recall growing up, how much access we had to the dam. In Mt. Rich, NAWASA has one of their storage facilities and the dams and all of that are there, and he asked me, "Do you recall how many times growing up we utilised that area for recreation or for holding crayfish? We put down pots by the river and all of that... I smiled because I remember those were easier days to live in.

He pointed out to me, and he said, but now we have limited access to that, and it dawned on me because I took it for granted. The things that we engaged in that were seen as fun for us, but what we did not realise was that some of the things we engaged in that were fun had serious implications for others, and so we engaged in that conversation.

And so sometimes I want us to realise that consultation does not always have to be around a big table or in a formal setting. But for me, that was consultation, and that was one of the main reasons why I decided to put aside how I felt this morning, physically, to be here because I represent this young man on the block and his concerns.

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And, so Deputy President, some of the other concerns that were raised were with young farmers. In my community, we have a lot of farmers, and a lot of the farming happens around the river source. Fortunately, for us in that community also, we have one of Grenada's best bottled waters, Glenelg Spring Water, and we have the NAWASA reservoir and all of that right next door. So we're very fortunate in St. Patrick, Deputy President, sorry, to have those waters, and the farmers are very fortunate to have that.

And so their concerns are, will this Bill limit access to water for small farmers like me? The answer is no. In fact, the Bill protects your access by ensuring proper allocation and sustainable use of water resources. It also promotes conservation strategies that will help farmers during dry seasons and periods of drought.

Another concern is how this will impact access to clean and safe water, particularly in rural communities like the one that I belong to. The Water Resource Management and Regulation Bill, establishes a structured approach to managing water resources. It ensures that potable water remains available for all including agricultural, industrial and domestic use. It also mandates conservation efforts to secure water for future generations, again the next 50.

Deputy President, another concern and I heard it raised, it is a very valid concern. Will this Bill increase water cost for citizens? This Bill focuses on improving efficiency, ensuring better oversight and regulating water use. By strengthening governance and planning it will prevent mismanagement and waste, ultimately protecting consumers from unnecessary price increase.

Deputy Chair, this Bill is not about raising costs, and I'm not saying... Deputy President, sorry. I am not saying that there will not be additional costs because the truth of the matter is that anything that you want to improve, in some way or another, must come with some significant cost. It may not be to the citizens, it may be to the Government, but I am not saying that it would not have any cost.

Deputy President, this Bill is not about raising costs, and I want to emphasise that. It is about preventing waste and ensuring fair distribution. It ensures that the water is properly managed so that everyone, including our young farmers who had those

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concerns, has affordable access for agriculture and daily use. And I can tell you that the people in the rural communities do enjoy a very cool and refreshing river bath from time to time, something that I actually miss.

Deputy President, another concern is, how does this Bill... Well, it's a concern, yes, but the concern was mostly about the benefits to the young people, especially those in rural areas. And I want to say to the young people that hey, this Bill... I know that you rely on that for your farming or livelihoods, but this is how this Bill can help you. It ensures a steady and reliable water supply for agriculture. It promotes conservation efforts to prevent water shortages, and it protects the rivers and other water sources from pollution and misuse, something that we took for granted as children growing up.

But I want us to look at the bigger picture, and I want us to look forward. Water security is national security, and I'm sure everyone in this Honourable House can agree with me. If we want to ensure Grenada's sustainable development over the next 50 years, we must take action today. **(Applause)** Deputy President, if we want a future where young farmers can thrive, where every child has clean water to drink and where Grenada remains resilient against climate change and challenges, we must take action now. **(Applause)**

Deputy President, this Bill is not just about today. It is about securing and laying the foundation for a future of development, transformation and unity, which also speaks to our 51st Independence theme, where every citizen has access to safe, reliable water resources. In life, everything is a cause and effect, and I know we have other Bills to bring before this Honourable House, but this Bill lays the foundation for the other Bills which we will debate here today.

So I urge all Senators to support this Bill and help shape a stronger, more resilient Grenada for the next 50-plus years that I intend to be a part of. Thank you, Deputy President. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox):** Senator Rahaman, you have the floor.

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**Sen. the Hon. Salim Rahaman:** Thank you, Deputy President. In order for us to scale our hotel sector, our business sector, it is important that we also improve our storage and our capacity to deliver water to all parts of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

So, with this in mind, and the fact that this legislation speaks to management, the business community supports such legislation. Because for those of us who have businesses in the south of the island, we know all too well the months and the weeks that you'd go without water. And just like Carriacou, having cisterns and water systems, tanks, it was not an option, it was a necessity in order to carry out business.

And so I grew up in the south, and growing up, every year for at least two months, we would not have water in the taps. So if we have to build out an economy, management of this key resource is absolutely essential, and I think that's what we are seeing here today with the comments, some suggestions that the Government can clarify. I have my own that I would like to be clarified, but in a general sense, this is something that is needed.

Deputy President, you pointed out that this one entity, NAWASA, would be replaced by three entities, and our concern as well is how well these entities will correlate with one another and the efficiency gains or lack thereof that could come from this. So, I would like you to share and to stand by those comments you've made, to make sure that the roles are clearly defined, so that there is greater efficiency and not less.

Now I note that the legislation speaks to applications every year, and the question that comes to mind is in the same way that we have our licence, vehicle licence, whereby it is renewed on a yearly basis, but we can renew it for a three-year term. I think that there are companies that are in the business of water, and in terms of ease of doing business, it would be easier if those companies could renew their licence every few years, every three years, if that accommodation can be made in the same way that it is made for your licence. I didn't see it, and if it is there, I would like that to be explained to me, but that would make it easier for companies that are already in that business.

And so, without repeating a lot of what has been repeated, this is something that is good for the private sector, and this is something that is good for the growth of Grenada.

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We have noticed that when there is drought, we have a problem with water, and when there is excessive rain, we also have a problem with water. And so, definitely, a scaling and better management is needed going forward, and the business community wholeheartedly supports this legislation. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Mr. Deputy President (Sen. the Hon. Norland Cox):** Senator Thomas, is it? Yes. You have the floor. Thank you. Just before you go...

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** Madam President in the Chair.

**Madam President:** Thank you. Senator Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Gloria Thomas:** Thank you, Madam President. I rise to give my support to the Bill before us here this morning. This Bill is a very detailed one, very comprehensive, containing six Parts and 56 clauses.

The Bill speaks to the management and regulation of water through the establishment of a Water Management Unit, separating the management and the regulation of the state's water resources from the provision and supply of water and sewerage services.

Madam President, this Bill is seeking to establish a structure to ensure sustainability with water resource management so that it can be a reality. The separation of responsibilities will ensure a more effective water resource management undertaking.

The goal of the Bill is to ensure that water resources are available for current and future generations. It also aims to ensure that the water resources are used in a coordinated way and that pertinent measures are undertaken to safeguard our water resources.

Madam President, Grenada has been involved in a number of discussions and consultations over the years on this same Bill. Studies were also conducted to inform the

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way forward. NAWASA has been clamouring for this for some time, and we are here today to make it a reality.

Madam President, the Water Resource Management Unit will be critical to NAWASA's ability to address adequate water supply and, by extension, the challenges posed by climate change. And so, Madam President, my full support is given to this Bill, thank you **(applause)**.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Thomas-Samuel. Thank you. Senator Roderick St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Thank you, Madam President. At least this time, I was not pushed to go early into the batting. I guess they were well prepared before me, so I thanked them, Members on "This Side".

So, Madam President, as I rise to make my contribution towards this Bill before us, the Water Resource Management and Regulation Bill, 2025, I sat here and I listened to the presentation of the Bill. I read it and understand its co-intensions. Having participated maybe five or six years ago, at what I would call, maybe a sort of "high-level discussion" pertaining to the policy that would have then driven this Bill here today, the policy is a totally different document from the Bill itself, clause by clause, and what it's not saying and what it's saying. So, for the first time, really, three or four days ago, we would have really seen what this Bill is.

In that regard, having read and understood the reach of its intention, I had to be reading and at least doing my work because water is a very important thing. We learn that 60% of our body is made up of water, but as an old Agriculture Science teacher like my good friend, Senator Cox, plants also use a lot of water. Sometimes 90% to 80% of plants are water; watercress, lettuces, tomatoes, everything, cocoa, nutmeg, banana are water; the rivers, our fish water, sea moss, water.

So I say all this to say, and we're not even speaking about sea water, we're speaking about the coastline as per the definition of water in the Bill as presented. So, as you would realise that this Bill is addressing a significant resource that impacts the

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whole nation and most specifically the agriculture sector, the agriculture sector which I sit here to represent their interest.

So, Madam President, I wish to look at the whole issue about what this water is because Senator Cox raised a very important point, and I read and I read and I read and I tried to figure out what is happening with where water comes from. Water comes from the sky, rainwater, even if it's under the ground, it would have come from condensation. Water. The definitions of water, Madam President, are on page 14.

It speaks about water in its natural state: flowing or situated on the surface of any land; flowing or contained in a lake or spring, or has been altered or artificially improved; and then it speaks about an estuarine, a long time I haven't seen that word, which is at the mouth of a river or the coastal waters. So it means that the people involved in the sea moss production are also affected.

So, I say this to say that it is my interpretation because I didn't hear that pronouncement in the presentation of the Bill. If it's the coastline, I know our sea moss producers are there producing sea moss. It involves that sort of setup. So, I wanted to understand what we are dealing with.

The issue, Madam President, of the abstraction, the extraction of water... Again, my constituents, my stakeholders, and our farmers would need to use water. Of course, there are many ways we use water in the agriculture sector, or we get water. Some people use the portable water directly from NAWASA. I understand the concerns of my dear friend Senator Lewis, but as I quipped to him privately, I said there's an opportunity not just now, but even then.

NAWASA should be involved in some sort of water that can provide for the agriculture sector in different ways (untreated water) and have that infrastructure so that farmers don't have to be worrying about pumps and all of those setups and they pay a fee for that and there might be some way that, that may be able to be an innovative downstream coming out of this.

Because when you look at the NAWASA Act and even with the amendments proposed, that component for NAWASA to provide agricultural water still remains. So it

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means that it is the Government's intention and policy that, if we want to say that, it expects NAWASA at some stage to find some way to service the agriculture sector. And I think this is an opportunity, and they are well placed, and they should be able to provide more jobs and keep the company much stronger, and have the farmers worrying less about having a pump here and a pump there and a pump there and so on. So this is something that I'm seeing out of this Bill.

Madam President, the issue of “aquifer”, a big word that I learned when I was doing geography at high school. In simple terms, my understanding of the definition as presented, we know there are farmers who would dig holes or they'll say wells in your lands, such that, they can capture rain water, or maybe there might be some small as they go down to the water table, they're going to access this water. If they don't dig it, the water will remain there, as we understand in basic geology, but if you dig, you're going to get water down at that level. Now, you may not know there is water there, it's like mining for water, and so you can dig, you can collect your rain water, you can put your tarpaulin and all those things to make it permeable, and this definition speaks to that.

So the question arises, what is the nature of the purview that this commission will have on this rain that will be falling and being captured in that aquifer on the farmers' farm? That is the question. What fees will be assigned to that, and what will be the other assessment that will be done that is happening there, if the farmer is involved in commercial activities as presented in the definitions? It was very clear that it is not only about private lands, but it is about what we refer to generally as a kitchen garden, backyard garden, and home use. But we know that... Where does this commercial start, Madam President?

You see, because sometimes we have ways of interpreting things and applying things to our own whims and fancies. So, for example, someone may have a tray of cabbage or two trays of tomatoes or a tray of tomatoes, and they do well, and they start selling in their front yard in the community. Would we say they are commercial because they start gaining an income, or do they need to have 40 trays to say that they are commercial?

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So, it may sound frivolous, but what is commercial? And the question is, is the word commercial defined in this definition? I am not too sure. So if that is an area that needs clarification, then we must define what it is such that there are no thoughts that would emerge in the minds of a private person, trying to do their own little gardening.

Of course, Madam President, it didn't speak to it, but it says it silently. So, if you are involved in the commercial activities of farming, you cannot just get water like that. You cannot just go into the dam, or you cannot just go into a river and pump. You cannot just set up dams and rivers. Of course, we know the negative consequences of those things, but we also enjoy the benefits of those actions through the food that we eat, and we export, and we enjoy for many years.

In fact, Madam President, if I may share with you a report from the <sup>1</sup>FAO, sometime... How did they call it? Some "Aqua..." "Aqua..." It was interesting. It's an FAO Report from 2015. According to Grenada studies, for one year, municipal water consumption is about 12 million cubic meters (extraction, utilisation), whereas agriculture is 2.1 million cubic meters.

So the question is, when you're trying to problem solve and trying to focus, where do you put your energies? And so, by and large, outside of NAWASA, for which we are thankful for the service, the bulk of users of our water are farmers, extraction, not all of them are on the river coast, not all of them are utilising the water. So, at least 2.1 million cubic meters... I was reading another report that says we have about 25% irrigation in Grenada, 25- 30%, so not all of it is really from the river; some might be rainwater harvesting, some might be from NAWASA.

So, really and truly, the question arises, how much is really involved there? They may say, well, it is not much, so St. Clair, sit down and shut up; it is not an impact. But what we do know is that it takes 200 to 300 farmers in Grenada to create a difference in our food security, and this is what matters.

So the question we would ask ourselves, notwithstanding my good friend Senator

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Thomas' presentation about consultation, where is the research to show us how much farmers are actually utilising our rivers? Where is the research? Because if we want to conserve and we want to... Where is the data? Are we going to come up with the Bill and say, okay, let's go and collect the data afterwards? That doesn't make sense. Where is the data to show what has been happening at the river, particularly for our farmers? In fact, when I read the Bill, it speaks a lot about going and doing research, doing studies and collecting data.

Now, I have also realised that a lot of the responsibility of this unit, research data collection, reporting collation, as my good friend Senator Cox spoke about, was some of the responsibilities of NAWASA. The question is, has NAWASA been doing that? And if not, then why not? And would that be new challenges that this new unit would have, and how would they address them? But more so, Madam President, let us suppose that NAWASA have the data; this will be very helpful for this data to be presented to show the justification that we really have a problem here or there in the management of this process.

I say all of this to say to us to apply... But before I go to the application, let's deal with the existing, as was presented very well by my good friend, the Leader for Government's Business. Farmers, you are on the river coast right now, don't worry, signed, sealed and delivered. The last 24 months you've been there, heaven knows who will prove that, that's another discussion. But let's suppose they prove it; that it was there.

It then means that they have an automatic, basically, that's what they are saying, they have an automatic, but they have to apply. It didn't say that they have to get an automatic licence; it says that you still have to apply. But when we look at the procedures and protocol for applying, the name, the address, how much water they would need, and so on, generally, farmers may be able to share that information.

But then it speaks about in the Act, under that section of application, there might be other information that may be required, heaven knows what that would be. I'm trying to figure out this long list of information. What more, really, would the farmer need? ... Maybe where he is selling, how much money he is making... In fact, there is a component

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in this Bill that speaks about an investigation to see how... Because next thing you say you're taking so much of the amount of cubic meters, but not that you're taking, and it involves investigation to involve even your income, even your records, even your employees, they can interrogate to collect information that unit we're speaking about.

So I say to myself, the unit is almost like a police force. These are the questions that are inside this Bill. I read it at 1 o'clock last night. I was reading it; it was three days, but I read it. It's there; I didn't miss it.

But, Madam President, what strikes me is when I realised that part of the requirement... **(Laughter)** Farmers. The farmers also have to submit what you call an Environmental Impact Assessment. I mean, big organisations do catch their hell to do that... Have to pay environmental firms thousands of dollars. Yes. He might be a commercial farmer, but I mean a farmer isn't making \$40,000 or \$50,000 a year easily. Where is he getting all this money to spend on the economic environmental assessment?

So let's suppose that my environmental impact assessment is there. Let's suppose that Senator Rahaman, Senator Lewis, and I are on the same river coast... Don't tell us we can form a partnership or cooperative to work together. We are independent operators. We are independent operators applying for this permit. Three of us have to go and do the study?

And so, I am saying to this other side, the "Government Side", Madam President, that this unit which supposed to be so well equipped and capable, which they have taken up responsibilities that NAWASA should be doing, heaven knows if they were doing it and is part of the whole make up, have to collect certain key data and should be providing all the necessary data; the environmental assessment and all those other stuff, all of those catchment areas that they would define as potential areas from where water can be extracted. So, if you want to access water, they can know based on what you want to do, they will tell you well, okay, you can meet or cannot meet because this area has this limitation and so on.

So it is better that way, it saves all of us money, and it makes life easier. So I know I would need so much amount, you say brother your land is there yes, but based on what

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you want to do this here might be a challenge rather than going and spend a set of money, do all of these things, you don't even collect a cent from a crop yet, you catching your hell to get a loan in the bank to even start this investment and you have to spend a set of money as a big business.

In fact, what is going to happen is that sooner or later, when farmers go to the bank, or good to their good friends in GDB get a loan, they would have to get a permit to make sure that they have a water access licence because GDB wants to make sure that they have water to produce the crops. But the interesting thing about it, Madam President, as Senator Rahaman rightfully gathered, is that the licence is only for one year. So even if you got this grace because you were there for 24 months, the licence is for one year.

And so, this recommendation, as we sit down in a bilateral, is not a bad idea at all. In fact, what is not said, but what is there in the Bill, is that you have to apply three months before the time is up to know if you're going to get another one. So, essentially, if we do maths, three from 12 leaves us with almost nothing.

So, go to a bank or a credit union and tell them that in the ninth or tenth month, you have to apply. They say, "Well, hold on, you have a five-year loan here". You go to any of the hotels to do a contract, they say, "Well, hold on, what's going on here?" I cannot guarantee that you'd be able to be sustainable in what you're doing. Now, we're making the farmers more unreliable. Now, we're not saying that intention is not good, but somehow, Madam President, some wheels aren't right in that vehicle.

And so it brings us back to some key issues. Key issues. Our good friends in that land use policy... Madam President, I didn't even say it. The Bill speaks about it. It speaks about the nature of the land, the geology and all of those things. Because if we understand land use policies, we will know what crops can grow in certain areas. The scientists will tell you how much water the different crops and so base on all those water assessment and water availability to understand the impact on the environment you can able to easily say you want to grow cabbage or tomatoes or cocoa or bananas, then this area here would not be good because the soil capacity to handle that storage and other impact would not be good. Additionally, the land itself is not good for growing the crop

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that you are working with, and that is what you call progress. What we are doing now, and I think Senator Lewis mentioned it, is having only the cart, not even the horse. Those missing elements will not get us to this thing.

In fact, the contradiction, Madam President, to this whole intention... What we're trying to do here is to see how we could make this thing work, you know, because how it is there now, it needs a lot of work. I understand the rush nature because that's why we are trying to do everything at once.

On page 17, is where the whole story unfolds. It speaks about the guiding principle on which this whole resource management will take place. I know that you, Madam President, are very familiar with this sort of territory, having been in that climate change area yourself.

The issue of the precautionary principle. I was shocked because it was the first time I saw that word, and then I think Senator Horsford spoke on that earlier in layman's terms. He said, "You will get to that point where you're not so sure that you would delay"... His concern is that there would be a lot of delay in decision making because the data is not there, the unit is set up and the best thing to do in that case, as a good friend of mine normally says, "When in doubt, leave out". And that is the negative part about that principle.

And so I ask myself, when I read the objective of this Bill, because it speaks about a phased implementation, but it doesn't give us a sense of when and which component will come in. That is a concern. That is an added concern. And then the other principle speaks about the polluter's principle, but the other two important principles have to do with the issue of the ecosystem and the forestry principle.

So I ask myself again, Madam President, while, yes, the intention might be good, the absence of a land use policy, which will interfere with our whole vegetation... Look at what is happening. We're cutting down trees. We're bulldozing places, building all sorts of structures that are still putting pressure back onto our whole water system, and then we're speaking on that as a guiding principle? Then this sounds very contradictory.

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But the last part of the principle that is very interesting, which I didn't think was leveraged in the Bill, and maybe the Government's policy is there, is the whole issue of common and differentiated responsibilities, whereby, we are saying to small nations that the developed world causes all of these problems, hence we're not getting enough water, and we're getting global warming and all of these things.

And so the question is, how can this Bill be leveraged to get a partnership with the developed world such that they could create better opportunities for investment: better for rain water harvesting, new technologies in irrigation, concessions and other sorts of opportunities. I am speaking specifically of the farming community. I'm not even veering into a business sector, etcetera. So this to me was a major area,

And then if I just go... Right. The issue of emergencies. I think that was addressed ably by Senator Cox, so I wouldn't go there. My other concern also had to do with the tribunal, and I'm not in the legal space as Senator Lewis, or the Attorney Senator... Hosford or the Attorney General. The issue of this tribunal.

I found it very sketchy, maybe it's my own ignorance, because my research... There's some tribunal that may involve some sort of judge, a magistrate. There are some tribunals that may involve a retired judge or some other senior person. So I was concerned about the tribunal because if there are grievances where you apply and you didn't get true, and there are some problems, and you want to appeal. The composition of that tribunal, I thought... Again, we could come up with a much better Bill, Madam President, it could have had some more clarity. We need to know because that could have just popped up.

You know, okay, you appeal? Okay, we will get Senator Rahaman, Senator Lewis and Senator... I think that we have to do better than that. This is not fair in itself. Otherwise, we could end up in court, and then I may hear that the tribunal is really the court. So then that I think should be clearer in this matter.

With that, Madam President, I trust that I may have captured all the key points that I wanted to raise pertaining to this, but overall, the intention is that we must have that... We must manage our resources; nobody says no to that, but sometimes it's the way that

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is being done that is the concern. The units and all of those things are not getting involved in that, but the mechanism I'm worried about. Our farmers have been extremely concerned. In fact, they said, Senator, you can't support that.

Farmers, we have to support the general idea of managing. We have to do our part. What we want to do is a fairness and a clearness. So, for example, Senator Lewis raised it, even if you have to do a licence you have to apply for the licence. We don't know what the fee would be yet, understandably so, but when you do get the licence, you have to pay for extraction, you have to pay for the amount of water you would be using.

The farmers would say, "Well, look, we don't have a problem paying, the question is how much"? And then for the economists and the accountants, you know, every time you incur a cost, you cannot keep a cost; otherwise, the business would burst. So this cost... Somebody must pay that cost.

And that is why, Madam President, notwithstanding the application for a licence to extract, notwithstanding the need for conservation, and we agreed with all of that. In addition to Rahman's suggestion, my good friend, Senator, it is our plea that this whole issue of the fee be very nominal, or I can hear the farmers say, "Senator, what happened to you, it should be zero for the first three or five years". Give them that break for those who would have invested so much already, and have to do this. Let us suppose that in the second year, they didn't get renewed. They have to break down all the irrigation? They have to break down the dams and rivers and all of these things?

This is more complex than we think it is. As lawmakers, we sit down here and think it's easy, don't worry about that man, and technicians are going to deal with that, but we must be mindful because it comes back to us; we all live in the same community. And so we're also making an appeal that this issue with the fee, we have to be mindful because this is going to drive right back into a food security it should be going back into a food security but we are just trying to achieve, we just come out in Beryl, some people cannot even go back to their lands right now.

And so sometime, Madam President, as I close, when farmers can see blue skies, if it is not one, it is the next. Certain things I'm not repeating because we could sing them

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quietly. Here we know we're coming... Now, unless we plan to implement the farmer's part 10 years from now, but I know. We are asking for the first 10 years, access to water for our farmers to be zero dollars, and that is the appeal we are making to the PURC from now on, and we will review it. We will look at it, and then we can look at a better structure. Don't create anxiety. 15% of the water is being used by our farmers, extracted, and maybe on the river coast, maybe little or nothing. Do the research before we even get there.

So, we're sending out a notice to the PURC. Otherwise, while brother André, Senator Lewis was talking about the trump card, and I didn't pick up the gist, we might be walking into our own tariff by increasing the cost of food, stupidly.

Farmers, Senators, I know the fee is not in the Bill, but we are appealing to the Government that when that time comes, please give us 10 years, otherwise, we may then have to pay much more for food, and I cannot stay silent. As a man said, "You cannot stay and take your death like a sheep. You have to say meh sometimes". I'm saying "meh" on behalf of the farmers, Madam President. We need a break. We'll support what needs to be done in a collaborative way, and you have our support, but a 10-year moratorium. We would give you good food and, of course, we can give you good prices. I thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator St Clair. Senator Adrian Thomas.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I would have liked to wrap up instantly, but I think there are a few comments I would like to make. It's been a very long time, I think, since I completed the presentation of this important Bill.

I must speak on some of the issues and concerns that were raised on the "Other Side" for the greater part of it, I must say I felt very good, and I thought we were doing a very honourable job. I would not leave this House, however, for the farmers in this country to have any imagination beyond their wildest dream that "This Side" of the House or many

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of the Senators and the "Other Side" are here to bring a system in place that will create doom and gloom and anxiety among the farming community in this country. **(Applause)**

Madam President, time and time I am here, again and again. I present Bills in this House, and the very comment that utters from many Senators' mouths is that it's a good Bill; I think it's a Bill that people of Grenada need and then on a few occasions, a barrage of buts and buts and buts creating doubts, glooming the minds of our farmers. This Administration, more than any other administration in the past, has always taken the farmers into consideration.

Madam President, we make laws for people, and we don't make people for laws. The reason why we have amendments and repeals is that not every piece of legislation will cover everything now or even in the future. Many times we cannot foresee the future, and when the circumstances arise, we come back here to make the necessary amendments and hence the reason why the next two Bills will be addressing some of the adjustments as our society evolves.

And therefore, Madam President, some concerns were raised. I will not answer them one by one. I will make the point. While the definition speaks to watercourse, water resource, waterworks, there is a definition here that many of us ignored this morning: water control areas. It's there for a purpose. If it were a blanket system where every drip of rain water, every drop of water on the surface in Grenada, if that were the case, this definition would not have been here. It is here for a purpose. And therefore, before you take any area into consideration, Madam President, the area must be declared a water-controlled area.

So, I understand the concern of Senator Cox. And if the farmers were to prepare some reservoirs to feed their animals and store water for the dry season, where they can feed their animals and provide water for their animals, that is a question that has to be answered, and I could understand the concern of Senator Cox. But at the same time, Senator Cox may collect in a reservoir, in a pond, a quiver. I may collect rainwater in a bucket. I may collect it in drums or tanks, put it under my house, or put it somewhere else.

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All those questions would arise, and I don't think it is the intention of the law to make life for the people and citizens of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **(Applause)** So those things, Madam President, yes, they are concerned, but we will not deny the Grenadian man and woman, boy and girl access to water. And Madam President, I think we need to consider those issues and think of them while we make and register our concern.

Madam President, obviously, some of these issues will be addressed when the regulations come into force. The issue was raised on the question of whether NAWASA would have to pay a fee, and some of the companies. The question is, they will all be subordinates to the unit, and yes, they would have to pay a fee, and that is what the management is all about. What is the fee? Yes, the legislation doesn't deal with the fee specifically because bucket of water, a tank of water, a whole reservoir, there are different circumstances, and the regulation would take care of those things.

So, Madam President, having said this, I would like to thank everybody for recognising and acknowledging the importance of this Bill at this point in time. I believe that the Grenadian people would be happy for it. They will understand it. They would see the direction that this Administration and the former administration, who I must commend for taking the initiative and the external organisations that are working with us like the international community, to make sure that we go in that direction for the sake of protecting the little that we have and sustaining it for future generations to come, is key. So I thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** Thank you for your summation, Leader of Government's Business.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business.

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**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Water Resources Management and Regulation Bill, 2025.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill, Part by Part.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

**Madam President:** Honourable Members, I have to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed with three amendments. Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Chair's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Madam President, I beg to move that the third reading of the Bill be taken at this time.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

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***Bills: National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2025***

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Water Resources Management Regulation Bill, 2025.

**Madam President:** Honourable Members, the Honourable House is adjourned for lunch. Maximum one hour; preferably 45 minutes.

**Senate adjourned at 1:24 p.m.**

**Senate resumes at 2:25 p.m.**

**Madam President:** Senator the Honourable Claudette Joseph, you have the floor, madam.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to introduce for first reading a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, the National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to amend the National Water and Sewerage Authority Act, Chapter 208, shortly entitled, National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended so as to enable the Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

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**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move that the second reading of the Bill be taken at this time.

**Question proposed.**

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, this Bill before this Honourable House; the National Water and Sewerage (Amendment) Bill, 2025 proposes to amend the National Water and Sewerage Authority Act, Chapter 208 of the 2010 revised laws of Grenada. Madam President, the Bill before you contains 20 clauses. And just in order of chronology... And before I go into the clauses in this proposed amendment to the NAWASA Act, I would like to say to this Honourable House that this Bill is complementary to the Act that we passed this morning, the Water Resources Management Act. And it is complementary because the Act passed this morning segregates their functions of water resource management and supply.

The NAWASA Act, as it stands, covers management and distribution. There are no provisions for regulations as there are for the regulation of other public utilities like electricity and telecommunications. So, Madam President, the Bills that are before this Honourable House today comprise a suite of legislation to enhance the management, distribution and regulation of water resources in Grenada as we seek to improve on all of those facets of water resources, and as we do that along with the project that is known nationally as the GCREWS Project, which is implementing some very, very significant improvements in the supply, distribution and storage of water across Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

So, Madam President, it is an entire package, and so the Water Resources Management Act will have full meaning, effect and functionality. Some amendments are necessary to the National Water and Sewerage Authority Act, and these are the amendments proposed by this Bill that I am presenting today.

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So clause 1 provides for, of course, the short title and commencement, which is standard. Clause 2 amends section 2 of the principal Act, the principal Act being the National Water and Sewerage Authority Act as I said before, and it repeals certain definitions in the principal Act and you would find those definitions being transported or they were transferred to the Act that we pass earlier; the Water Resources Management Act. So that's what clause 2 will do. There is an amendment that we would treat when we get to the Committee stage in terms of one of the definitions that we have in this Act, and that would be "waterworks". I think the proposal in this Act is to delete the definition of "waterworks" in the principal Act, but for reasons which I can explain at the Committee stage, we will not delete that particular definition.

Madam President, clause 3 of this Bill inserts a new provision to declare the authority, the authority being the National Water and Sewerage Authority, a Public Utility under the PURC Act and for the authority to cease performing certain functions as it does now. Madam President, clause 3 of this amended Act provides that as from the date of operation of the Water Resources Management and Regulations Act, the authority shall cease to perform any function relating to the management of water resources in Grenada and as such, such function shall be vested in the unit that is set up pursuant to the provisions of the Water Resources Management and Regulation Act. So this is the section under which the management function of NAWASA is now moved to the unit set up under the Water Resources Management and Regulation Act.

Then, Madam President, we have the section dealing with national policy, and that is section 3 of the principal Act. And that section is going to be amended to restate the provisions on policy for water supply and sewerage services to remove the section dealing with the management of water. So, everything management-related will be removed from the NAWASA Act so that NAWASA will now be charged with distribution, supply, and, of course, the treatment and disposal of sewerage and other effluents.

Madam President, Section 6 seeks to amend section 7 (1) of the principal Act to mandate the authority to provide the public a satisfactory supply of portable water for domestic purposes and a satisfactory supply of water for agricultural, commercial and

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industrial purposes.

Section 7 repeals and replaces... It says there, section 11 of the principal Act, but that should be section 12. Madam President, that's another correction we would have to make. Repeals and replaces section 12 of the principal Act by saving all existing rights of the authority to use, abstract, manage and control the flow of water upon the terms of their grant or other lawful authority under which they are held. The provision also empowers the unit, that's the unit set up by the Act passed this morning, and the authority to enter into a service agreement if any dispute arises concerning the terms of the service agreement, the Commission shall seek to resolve the dispute, the Commission being the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission. (PURC)

Then you have the repeal of sections 12 and 13 of the Act by clauses 8 and 9. Clause 10 amends section 17 of the principal Act to empower the authority, after consultation with the unit, to take steps necessary to protect its water supply services or sewerage services after the authority gives notice to the owner of land. And the amendment there, the current provision says, the authority may, after reasonable notice has been given to a landholder concerned, if it appears to the board, that is the Board of NAWASA, to be necessary to protect water resources, sewerage, it may construct and maintain upon the lands such works as it considers necessary, etcetera. So, that's the amendment that would be made to section 17.

Section 23 of the principal Act is also amended to remove the provisions dealing with... Sorry. Sorry. Yes.

**Madam President:** May I interrupt you, please, madam?

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Yes, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Clause 10, which repeals section 17 of the principal Act. So, clause 10 of the new proposed Bill authorises the authority to construct and maintain upon

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the land such works as the authority considers necessary or desirable. How is the land to be made available?

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, the Water Resources Management Act that we passed this morning provides that all water resources. So, section 34 of the NAWASA Act would be amended. That is the section which gives authority over NAWASA of all water resources in Grenada. If you look at the current section... Section 34... Yes. Section 35, rather, that gives authority... Hold on. I am citing the wrong section. Let me get it. Let me just get it here. Sorry. I think I am citing the wrong section. Is it 26? Is it 26 that gives the power over the Water Resources Management Act? Right.

Madam President, I will get back... Section 25... This is the Water Resources Management Act now, which says, "Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any existing enactment, the abstraction and use of water in the state and the construction of any works for such abstraction and use, shall be governed by the provisions of this Act, and accordingly, nothing in any existing enactment shall be construed as derogating from any provision made by, or pursuant to, the provisions of this Act".

So, it gives the unit the power to have control over the water resources in Grenada. A similar provision is to be found in section... I am thinking 35 of the current Act, but it's not that. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** No. Not six. I can't find the actual section in the existing Act, but both bits of legislation give power over all water resources in the land, and the new section would be 25. The governing section would be 25 of the Water Resource Management Act now.

Section 17, which I was treating with... So section 17 of the current Act says, "the authority," that's NAWASA, "after reasonable notice has been given to the landholder concerned, if it appears to the Board to be necessary to protect water resources or sewerage, may construct and maintain upon the land such works as it considers desirable". And that is, "to protect the body of water to dispose or control the flow of water

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to conserve or store water distribution, apportionment, measurement of water or collection treatment and disposal of sewerage”.

And then we go on to 18, which says, “the authority shall pay compensation”. You know our Constitution prohibits the state from acquiring private property without prompt compensation being paid. So to make provision for that, section 18 of the NAWASA Act provides that, “the authority shall pay compensation to the owner of the land on which works are being done under section 17”. The new Act mirrors this as well.

So, it vests all water resources in the unit set up by the Water Resources Management Act and provides for compensation to be paid to landowners in appropriate cases. And since that authority is now transferred to the Water Resources Management Unit, section 17 of the NAWASA Act is consequentially amended to provide that, in consultation with the unit, if NAWASA considers it necessary to protect its water supply services, the authority may after giving notice to the owner of the land, construct and maintain upon the land such works as the authority considers necessary.

So, whereas under the NAWASA Act as it stands now, it doesn't consult with anyone. It does what it thinks is necessary to protect water supply services or watercourses. Under the amended Act, it will have to consult with the unit because it is the unit that will have control of the resources themselves. NAWASA will only be supplying, distributing and managing sewerage services.

There would be an amendment to section 23. This Act proposes to amend section 23. Section 23 deals with sewerage disposal, and it includes simple cosmetic amendments to bring that section into conformity with the Water Resources Management Act. So it will, in subsection (2), delete “and” after the words “Chapter 263”, and it will also delete the full stop after “Regulations” and add the following words “, and the Water Resources Management and Regulations Act”. So that will bring section 23 under the auspices of the Water Resources Management and Regulations Act.

Section 27 of the principal Act is proposed to be amended by deleting subsection (1), which now provides... Let me get section 27. Section 27 provides as follows: for the purposes of performing its duties under section 6(3)(h), the authority shall recommend to

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the Minister the establishment of water supply and sewerage areas by reference to define the limits or some other description.

These responsibilities will now be transferred to the Water Resources Management Unit so that the new subsection (1) will read, "For the purpose of the performance of its duties under section 6(3)(h), the authority shall recommend to the Commission, that the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission, the establishment of water supply and sewerage areas by reference to defined limits or some other specific description".

So, Madam President, what we see happening is that wherever NAWASA, as a statutory authority, has autonomy as it relates to the management of water resources, they must now either defer to and consult with the unit established under the Water Resources Management Act or PUR because they would now be a regulated entity under PURC. So some of that autonomy, pretty much all of the autonomy, when it comes to management of water resources, now would be transferred.

So, subsection (3) of section 27 of the NAWASA Act would be deleted, and the following section will appear, "The Commission may, that the PURC, on the recommendation of the authority, from time to time, vary the limits or description of any area established by order under subsection (2)".

Section 27a of the principal Act, and section 27 deal with levying and collection of rates, charges and fees. And 27A, basically, now would read, "Subject to certain sections of the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission Act, the authority shall levy and collect such charges or fees for the provision of water supply and sewerage services at such rates as may be approved by the Commission in accordance with the provisions of that Act. So, the PURC would now be charged with regulating and setting rates for NAWASA. So that is no longer under the exclusive purview of NAWASA.

Section 28, which deals with rates, charges and fees, will subsequently be deleted because this will now be within the purview of PURC.

Section 30 of the principal Act is amended by deleting the chapeau and substituting

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therefor the following section: "Subject to the provisions of the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission Act, charges or fees in respect of the provision of water supply and sewerage services may be fixed".

And then we have section 34, which would also be amended to delete "Authority", there referring to NAWASA itself, and replacing it with the "Commission", meaning PURC. And 34 has to deal with standpipes and public taps. And what the current provision says is that, "water used by the public from standpipes shall be considered an obligation and service of the Government, the cost of which shall be assessed by the authority and made payable by the Government monthly". So, PURC would now be setting the cost and the rates payable by the Government to NAWASA for water used out of public taps and standpipes. So PURC is now taking on that responsibility for setting charges and so.

It speaks somewhat to the conflict that Senator David Andrew mentioned when he spoke. It makes for better and more transparent management of our water resources and takes away the appearance of self-serving in the position of rates and levies.

So I think we are heading in the right direction. I note that all of our colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle support the Bill. They have some concerns with the procedure and timeliness of receiving the papers for Parliament, and I trust that the Office of the Houses of Parliament will attend to these concerns because we all have to be prepared and ready when we come to these Houses to do the people's business.

Despite the concern about the tardiness in receiving the documents, our colleagues all see the wisdom in this legislation. They all understand the bigger picture, and everyone appears to appreciate that the establishment or the enactment of the suite of legislations will ultimately be down to the benefit of our people as we provide for them that which the Act itself, the Water Resources Management Act itself, describes as a basic human need.

So we want to ensure that the management, supply, distribution and regulation of water resources is undertaken within a framework and under a legislative regime that is transparent, that is sustainable, and that will result in improved quantity and quality of water supply and a reliable sewerage management mechanism in Grenada.

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So, Madam President, with that said, I will commend to you the provisions of this amendment to the National Water and Sewerage Authority Act.

The sections that I didn't mention, sections 17 and 18, simply repeal certain consequential sections of the NAWASA Act, mainly in Part VI. And Part VI really dealt with the management side of NAWASA's functions. Catchment areas and all of that, so basically, Part VI and some of Part VII, which all deal with the management of the water supply, those sections consequently had to be repealed with the coming into force of the Water Resources Management and Regulations Act.

And then a minor amendment to section 52 of the Act, which deletes certain subparagraphs, L, P, Q and S, all again dealing with management, which no longer would be under the purview of NAWASA. So with that said, Madam President, I commend the Bill to this Honourable House. Thank you. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank the distinguished Senator for walking us through this change in landscape which highlights the role of the PURC as a governing regulatory body which will now take on the National Resources Management and Regulatory arrangements under the Bill we passed this morning and with the amendments now before us, I invite colleague Senators to make their contributions. And just to remind us, thanks Senator, that we will make the correction to clause 7 to repeal and replace section 12 of the principal Act and not section 11. Is that correct, Senator Joseph?

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Yes, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thanks much. Thank you. The floor is open. I think you are the ones to go because we have just heard from "This Side" of the room. Senator St. Clair, you are first up.

**(Inaudible comment by Senators) (Laughter)**

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**Madam President:** Senator Joseph.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate to consider the Bill Clause by Clause. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)** Madam President, I am sorry. I thought we just did the second reading. **(Inaudible comment by Senators)**

Madam President, I noticed what has happened, so I was anxious to get on **(laughter)** with the process. Let me just thank colleagues on “Both Sides” of the House for so readily grasping the presentation. I actually thought it was a bit disjointed, but evidently not; everybody is happy with the presentation.

So, Madam President, I thank everyone for their ready appreciation of the amendment to the NAWASA Act.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Attorney General. You're a good Attorney.

**(Laughter)**

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Yes, Madam President. I beg now, Madam President, to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate so that we might consider the Bill, Clause by Clause.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Joseph.

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**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee.**

**Senate resumes.**

**Madam President:** Honourable Members, I have the honour to report that the Bill was considered by a Committee of the whole Senate and passed with amendments. Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Chair's Report be adopted.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. Claudette Joseph:** Madam President, I beg to move that the third reading of the Bill be proceeded with at this time.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, National Water and Sewerage Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Madam President:** Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Thank you, Madam President. I beg to introduce

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for first reading, a Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Clerk:** A Bill which seeks to effect some consequential amendments to the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission Act No. 20 of 2016 to empower the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission to have regulatory oversight of the Water Resources Management Unit in managing the state's water resources, shortly entitled, Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Madam President:** Thank you. Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move that the relevant Standing Order of the Senate be suspended to enable this Bill to be taken through all its stages at this Sitting.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Relevant Standing Order suspended.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

**Question proposed.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

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**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, this Bill, the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025, is one of three Bills that we've been discussing today, and they are all in a package. As was quite rightly identified, the functions of what was one water authority responsible for both management, treatment, distribution, and protection of all of these things were with one entity, and now they are being put into different agencies for different responsibilities.

This Bill seeks to effect some of the consequential amendments to the Public Utility Regulatory Commission Act No. 20 of 2016 to empower the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission to have regulatory oversight of the Water Resource Management Unit in managing the state's water resources.

The new water resource management unit that we referenced in passing the first Bill here today will be given oversight by the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission, and that is what this seeks to do. It seeks to give PURC the authority to do so. Now, this brings the operation of the Water Management Unit into alignment with some of the other utilities of the state. Most of the utilities operate, and they are indeed regulated. So the NTRC, the National Telecommunications Regulations Commission, gives regulatory oversight to the function of the telecommunication providers. They regulate pricing and various elements of their operation, but in turn, they are regulated by the PURC, the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission.

And so too, although we have the unit that was talked about earlier, through whom and along with which NAWASA would have to work, or any other person wanting to abstract water, for instance, that unit will itself have to be regulated by the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission, as put forward by this Bill.

This Bill contains 14 clauses, and, of course, we have the short title and the commencement date, which we anticipate would be indicated.

Clause 2 provides for the repeal and replacement of the long title of the principal Act, which will now include the new role of the Commission in providing oversight to the Water Resource Management Unit. It will therefore read, "AN ACT to provide for the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission to regulate the service provided by, and determine

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the rates for, public utilities; and to further confer on the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission, regulatory oversight of the management of water resources and for related matters". So that's what the new long title will be.

Clause 3, Madam President, amends section 2 of the principal Act by repealing and replacing the definition of the term 'complaint' and by inserting new terms "Unit" and "water resources". So in the principal Act, "complaint" was defined with a single definition which included both challenges to the persons having an opportunity to challenge the rate payable for any service, and also the quality of service provided, so these two elements were wrapped up in one single definition. This amendment separates the definition into two.

- (a) dealing with the rate payable; and
- (b) the quality of service provided.

We also talk about two new definitions here. So "Unit", as included here as a definition, means the Water Resource Management Unit as provided for in this Act through section 7. And, of course, "water resources" means any surface of land upon which water is situated or any other water course that is rivers, streams, ditches, gullies, culverts, dykes, and passageways through which water flows, be it surface or underground, except, of course, water mains and sewers.

Clause 4, Madam President, amends section 4 of the principal Act to increase the composition of the Commission when it sits from a three-person or a five-person Commission to a seven-person Commission. So we are increasing the number of Commissioners who will sit. The amendment seeks to expand the competence of members of the Commission to include environmental science management.

I want to point out here. We need... This Amendment is securing more commissioners and ensuring that a wider cross-section of expertise and expert skills are brought into the Commission. Previously, in the case of the principal Act, in the case of a three-member commission, the regulations required the chair and one other member to have qualification in areas like law, economics, engineering, accounting, business management or environmental science management and in fact this last one is a new

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addition that this amendment is seeking to put in to ensure that we have more environmental specialist being part of the Commission.

Previously, we had only the chair and one person required to have a qualification when you had a three-member commission. Or in the case of a five-member commission, you had the chair and two members. In those cases that reflected a 60% or a 66% or two-thirds per cent representation respectively of persons on the Commission who had qualifications in those expert areas.

This proposed amendment seeks a five-member commission, four members with expertise in the named fields and a seven-member commission they with five out of the seven members needing to have qualifications in the expert fields, reflecting 80% and 71%, respectively, of experts on the Commission. So, of course, it does increase there.

Clauses 5, 6, 7 and 8 serve to amend sections 5,7, 10 and 12 respectively of the principal Act to insert the words “or the unit”. In those provisions, they are inserted after the words “public utilities” wherever they appear. So, in those sections, 5, 7, 10 and 12 are to include “the unit”, so not just the public utilities as we know them, but they are also included in the unit. So whatever, then, applies to the public utility would also apply to the unit, and that is why we are adding “or the unit” in those sections.

And so, for instance, section 5, which deals with the Appointment of Commissioners, will relate to public utilities or the unit, meaning the Water Management Unit. Likewise, section 7, which deals with the Termination of Commissioners, would now reference both the public utilities and the unit. Section 10 speaks to the declaration of interest, and it will apply both to public utilities and the unit. Section 12 speaks to the retention of experts, and it would apply both to public utilities and the unit as being defined in this Act.

Clause 9, Madam President, amends section 13 (3) of the principal Act by inserting the words “or any other enactment under which the Commission has oversight of regulatory functions”. It says in other words, that a committee appointed under this section may serve in an advisory or consultative capacity to the Commission in regards to the Commission’s exercise of its power under this Act and shall exercise such power

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as specified in the terms of reference of the Committee “or any other enactment”, and that’s the part that’s being added, “or any other enactment under which the Commission has oversight or regulatory function”, that’s Clause 9.

Clause 10, Madam President, seeks to amend section 14 of the principal Act which addresses the Funds of the Commission repealing subsection (2) which relates to the Commission having to find its own funds on its own budget to be funded by the annual assessment imposed by the Commission by the Public Utilities which by the regulation should not exceed 2% of the gross income of any utility. The Amendment now states that the Commission is to be funded as follows:

- (a) An annual assessment imposed on each public utility in keeping with this Act, which was alluded to a little earlier, and it's customary. It's not likely to be more than two per cent of any gross income;
- (b) Sums allocated to the Commission by the Parliament;
- (c) All other sums which may become payable to the Commission in respect of any matter related to its functioning;

And that's the context of clause 10.

Additionally, this amendment adds a section (6a) which says, “The Commission shall keep”, and this is a new section. “The Commission shall keep proper records of funding received under section 14 (b) and (c) in accordance with generally accepted international standards and principles, and shall prepare and retain financial statements in respect of each financial year”. So, there's a financial obligation being imposed here as part of the amendments for the unit to maintain financial records.

Clause 11, Madam President, amends section 17 of the principal Act to confer the requisite powers on the Commission to carry out the new functions assigned to it under the principal Act. So, I quickly want to read through that section. That section is pretty... Section 17... Now, there are some elements of the section that are already in the principal Act, like:

- (a) to hear and determine complaints under section 18 relating to the rates payable for any service in the public utility on the grounds that such rates are unfair;

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- (b) hear and determine claims under section 19 by a public utility for a change of rates payable for any of its services on the grounds that such claimed rate change would be fair and reasonable, making the changed rates a fair return upon the fair value of its property;
- (c) hear and resolve disputes that may arise between parties. So, I think some of this was alluded to earlier. If we have two or three or four more persons wanting to abstract water, how does that... There's a process here. So, to hear and resolve any disputes that may arise between parties governed by an enactment relating to the supply of services by a public utility;
- (d) to provide advice to any other Minister with responsibility for the sector, in which any utility or public utility is subject to this Act, in relation to the performance of his or her functions, duties and powers as provided for under the enactment and licence or permit granted under the enactment;
- (e) enforce the terms and conditions of any licence granted or issued pursuant to any enactment under which the Commission has been conferred regulatory function and powers;

And here's where some of the new elements have come in, because some of the others I've mentioned before, they have been in the principal Act, some of them, but those that I'm going to call now have mostly been incorporated, they have been amendments.

- (f) have regulatory oversight of the unit, in accordance with the functions assigned to it, under the Water Resource Management and Regulation Act and advise the Minister on the formation of national policy on matters relating to the regulation of water resources;
- (g) provide for the efficient and economic development of public utility services and water resource management entities;
- (h) to ensure the economic regulation of public utility services;
- (i) to ensure compliance with the Government's international and regional obligations, in relation to the management of water resources;

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- (j) be responsible for the technical regulation of public utility services, and the setting of technical standards having regard to the international standards and best practices relating to public utility services;
- (k) establish, approve, monitor and review tariff schemes and tariffs, in accordance with any enactment in respect of which the commission has been given regulatory functions;
- (l) monitor and ensure that licensees comply with the conditions attached to their licences;
- (m) monitor and ensure that licensees comply with standards set by the Commission;
- (n) ensure the protection of the interests of consumers, and I think somebody mentioned they didn't hear much about the consumer earlier, but here we have to ensure the protection of the interests of consumers in relation to the provision of services;
- (o) receive and evaluate consumer complaints and resolve disputes in accordance with any enactment, in respect of which the Commission had been given regulatory functions;
- (p) promote competition and monitor anticompetitive practices in the public utility services;

So obviously this is a function they have, to ensure that as much as possible the water sector can be diversified, facilitating free open market competition.

- (q) undertake, in conjunction with other institutions and entities where practicable, training, manpower, planning, seminars and conferences in areas of national and regional importance in relation to public utility services and the management of water resources;
- (r) require payment of and collect fees payable under this Act and any other Act in respect of the Commission, which has regulatory oversight functions; and
- (s) to carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it under any enactment, regulating the sector in which any public utility subject to this Act operates, including to hear and determine any other matter designated to be under the

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jurisdiction of the Commission, and to perform any other function and exercise and other powers designated to it, under any other enactment.

Right? So those constitute, Madam President, the amendments impacting clause 11.

Clause 12, I move on, repeals and replaces section 32 of the principal Act, which addresses appeals. So, of course, there's a provision that sets out in more detail the procedure relating to appeals, how it's done, what steps to follow.

But very critical;

- (a) the appeals Tribunal is empowered to dismiss the appeal and confirm the decision of the Commission;
- (b) the Tribunal is empowered to allow the appeal to set aside the decision; or
- (c) to vary the decision.
- (d) to allow the appeal and direct that the matter, the subject of the appeal, be determined afresh by the unit or the Minister.

So that had to do with clause 12, repealing section 32 and making clear procedures for the processes of appeal.

Clauses 13 and 14, Madam President, amend sections 36 and 37 respectively under the principal Act, to insert the words "or the Unit" in the principal Act after "public utility". Now, that is pretty much similar to a section I read upfront, wherever they appear. Wherever reference is made to "public utility", the words "or the unit" will follow in this amendment, ensuring that what applies to the public utilities also applies to the Water Resource Management Unit, referred to as the unit.

So section 36 talks about technical assistance and research. When you talk about that for public utilities, you will add "or the unit", implying that that's also available for the unit, the Water Resource Management Unit.

Section 37 deals with the advisory function of the Commission. And when that is talked about in relation to public utilities, and you add "or the Unit", it begs that the same applies for both the public utilities and the Water Resource Management Unit.

So, Madam President, having gone through this, I'm quite satisfied that these amendments help to tighten the three bits of legislation that we know would have to be

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brought to bear, on seeing the effective water resource management. Because it cannot just be done simply by putting the Water Resource Management Bill together, or simply by touching the NAWASA, because at the end of the day, we still need to have them regulated, and so all three were touched. This is the last piece in it and I'm happy to present this to the Honourable House for their discussion, debate and ultimately their approval. I thank you very much, Madam President. **(Applause)**

**Madam President:** I thank you, Senator David Andrew. Senator Roderick St. Clair.

**Sen. the Hon. Roderick St. Clair:** Yes. Don't be worried. **(Laughter)** I stand because this morning I asked the question, I didn't get a clarification, and I see it show up here again, the issue of this Tribunal. I am concerned in terms of the composition of it and whether it should have been specified as to how it would be composed, or, you know, who appoints the tribunal. These are some concerns to close the whole loop.

I found this morning, and again, the fact that the PURC would sort of oversee a lot of these processes, it will be interesting to have an idea as to this Tribunal, not necessarily the process, but the composition, appointment and so on. Thank you, Madam President.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator. Other contributions? I think Senator Andrew will come back with your response shortly. Senator David Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** **(Laughter)** Madam President, I beg your pardon. Sorry for me, for laughing like this in your Honourable House. **(Laughter)**

**Madam President:** **(Laughter)** A small laugh is allowed—provocation from the “Other Side” is not. **(Laughter)**

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Yes, Madam President. So, let me thank my colleagues. I understand what's happening here. I think it's a fact that the substantive

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part of the discourse came earlier with the first Bill. I mean, and once you get past most of the hurdles there, I think the other pieces would more naturally fall into place.

So, I don't think it's a case where I'm getting spared because I'm from La Digue. **(Laughter)** I don't think it's a case like that. I think it's just the fact that we've... but I want to thank my colleagues for the honest approval, I mean not just for this last Bill, but for those that went before. And the way they identified issues, some genuine, really genuine issues that, I mean, are worthy of being considered and thought about, and no doubt they will be reflected in either the regulations or subsequent amendments, if needed. But at this point, I see no reason why they cannot be treated with, in the regulations to guide the implementation of this policy framework. So I'm confident they will be captured there.

So I want to thank all of you for your support, for your comments and your participation in these debates, and certainly we look forward to having them eventually passed, and to positively impact on the management, eventually the service treatment and distribution of Grenada's water resource, to the benefit, to the interest of all of our Grenadians, our citizens who use and depend on portable water for domestic use, our farmers who need water to help feed us and keep us alive, even the coastal waters, which was referenced at some point.

And so, Madam President, with those anticipations and looking forward, I commend this Bill to you and the rest of the House for your guidance. Thank you.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator Andrew. No request for the floor. So I take it, this was just a summation, Senator. Just a small comment from the Chair. I think all queries must be regarded as sincere. I think you meant to say that, that some may, you meant to say that. Thank you.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act shortly entitled, Public Regulatory Commission

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(Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Madam President:** Senator Andrew.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move that the Senate resolves itself into a Committee of the whole Senate, to consider the Bill, Clause by Clause.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Senate in Committee**

**Senate resumes**

**Madam President:** Honourable Senators, I have the honour to report that Bill was considered by a committee of the whole Senate and passed with amendment. Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move that a Chair's Report be adopted.

**Madam President:** Thank you, Senator.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Chairman's Report adopted.**

**Madam President:** Senator.

**Sen. the Hon. David Andrew:** Madam President, I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

**Question put and agreed to.**

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***Adjournment***

**Bill read a third time and passed.**

**Clerk:** A Bill for an Act, shortly entitled, Public Regulatory Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

**Deputy Clerk:** Item 16 – Public Business.

Item 17 – Adjournment.

**Madam President:** Leader of Government's Business.

**Sen. the Hon. Adrian Thomas:** Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move that the Honourable House be adjourned sine die.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**The Sitting of the Senate adjourned sine die at 4:38 p.m.**

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