



**STATEMENT BY PREMIER HON. ALDEN MCLAUGHLIN ON
LANDFILL VISIT TO TAMPA, FLORIDA**

IN THE MEETING OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN CAYMAN BRAC

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to make a brief statement regarding my recent trip to Tampa, Florida, to delve into waste management and the possibilities of workable solutions for the Cayman Islands.

I'm sure Members of this Honourable House will agree with me, Madam Speaker, when I say that finding and implementing a sustainable, integrated solid waste management system is an increasingly urgent issue for the Cayman Islands. Not only in Grand Cayman, where we have seen the George Town landfill feature prominently in the local press, but also here in Cayman Brac where the existing landfill is rapidly reaching its capacity, and in Little Cayman where we need to take steps

to ensure that the nearly pristine natural environment of that unique Island is protected.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, as a country we cannot afford to maintain the status quo when it comes to the issue of solid waste management - we need to find solutions that are integrated, sustainable, and will address the issue not only in the immediate timeframe but into the future as well. This is an issue of national importance Madam Speaker - one that we need to address not only for ourselves, but for our children and our children's children, to allow them to enjoy the same high standard of living and natural environment that we sometimes take for granted.

As Members of this Honourable House will be aware, the Minister responsible for Environmental Health, the Hon. Osbourne Bodden, has embarked upon the process that we believe will identify the best solution for solid waste management for the Cayman Islands. The multi-sector Steering Committee under his Ministry, which is chaired by his Ministry's Chief Officer, has been working hard on moving this important project forward. Comprised primarily of civil servants with relevant technical expertise, I am confident that this Committee's work will help Government identify and implement the solutions that we need, and that

these solutions will be appropriately researched, assessed, and therefore successfully implemented to the benefit of the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, I believe that Minister Bodden will be making a statement providing more detail on the work of the Steering Committee and the process going forward, so I will not go into too much detail about those areas. However, as I indicated in my opening comments, I do want to take a few moments, Madam Speaker, to speak to our recent trip to the Tampa area to visit various waste-management facilities.

Last week Minister Bodden and I travelled to the Tampa area with Jennifer Ahearn, the Chief Officer in Minister Bodden's Ministry and Chair of the Integrated Solid Waste Management System Steering Committee, and the Director of Environmental Health, Mr. Roydell Carter. The purpose of our visit was to familiarise ourselves with various waste management options, with a particular emphasis on waste-to-energy systems. Over the course of three days, we visited four waste-to-energy facilities, two landfills, and one recycling processing centre. We had the opportunity to meet with operators, regulators, and government agencies and hear first-hand about their experiences with

the technology, the different financing models, and the governance structures. We also got to witness the waste-to-energy technology in action, and gained a better understanding of how it could potentially form part of the integrated solid waste management system for the Cayman Islands. Madam Speaker, while I know that some have questioned the utility of the trip and wondered why I went along, I can state without reservation that the trip was very informative and very worthwhile, and it has given me a much better understanding of the very real and complex issue of solid waste management, which I believe is a tangible benefit given the national importance of this issue.

One very key observation I can make from that trip, Madam Speaker, is that it reinforced my belief in the importance of having an overarching strategy when looking at solid waste management. It is a complex issue with many moving parts, so it is important to take a strategic and rational approach when looking for a solution. We simply cannot afford to take a piece-meal approach to this problem - we need to look no further than the current situation to know that approach will not lead to a sustainable solution. Madam Speaker, while we need to find a solution urgently, we must not make the mistake of past administrations and attempt to deal with the components in isolation. In order to find the best solution, and

increase the chances of its successful implementation, we need to give the Cayman Islands an integrated solid waste management solution that is framed and guided by a national strategy. I am pleased to report, Madam Speaker, that Minister Bodden has undertaken to deliver that national strategy as part of the on-going integrated solid waste management solution procurement process, and I applaud Minister Bodden for his vision in that regard.

Madam Speaker, the procurement process for major projects like the landfill is outlined in the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility and enshrined in the Public Management Finance Law. The processes we are required to follow are identical to the one that is being done for the cruise ship berthing project; we must create a Strategic Outline Case, which will provide an overview of the issue and identify as well as broadly assess the various options for budget. This Strategic Outline Case will then form the basis for an Outline Business Case, which will provide further evaluation of the options and result in a better definition of the project for procurement. There will also have to be an Environmental Impact Assessment and stakeholder consultation, which will include the public.

The processes that are in place under the Public Management and Finance Law are there in large part because of the disastrous consequences of the last tendering exercise conducted by government for a waste management solution. These processes will ensure transparency and accountability in the procurement process this time round. While there have been previous tenders, and there are quite a few studies about this subject, the fact is that the previous iterations were not subjected to the level of research, assessment, and scrutiny that the process currently requires.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I am happy that I accompanied the Minister and his staff on the trip to Tampa so that I could see first-hand what is possible in regards to waste management in the Cayman Islands. I now know that we can move forward – and do so aggressively – to solve the waste management issues we have on all three Cayman Islands.