



Cayman Islands Government

STATEMENT TO
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

BY

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MINISTER FOR HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT,
CULTURE AND HOUSING

**UPDATE ON THE GREEN IGUANA
CULLING PROGRAMME**

16 NOVEMBER 2018

Update on the Green Iguana Cull Programme

16 November 2018

Mister Speaker, I rise to provide an update to the Members of this Honourable House on the admirable progress that the Government is making with the Green Iguana Culling Programme.

Mister Speaker, the Government has been working on a solution to address the problems that the invasive Green Iguanas are causing for our country. Each Member of this House is acutely aware of these issues, as our surveys and research has shown that these invasive pests are present in every district in the Cayman Islands, although the vast majority of Green Iguanas are in Grand Cayman, with larger populations in the districts of Bodden Town, George Town, and West Bay.

In May 2018, the Department of Environment (“DoE”) completed the Outline Business Case (“OBC”) for the green iguana culling project, which is required by the Central Procurement Office, and a requirement of the Procurement Law, to justify the use of Government funding for such a large undertaking. In August 2018 Mister Speaker, before the cull project began, our green iguana survey indicated that the Green

Iguana population in Grand Cayman was between 1.1million and 1.6million Green Iguanas.

During the week of 15th to 19th of October 2018, the DoE conducted a culler registration, which attracted a massive response from all sections of our society. During the registration period, green iguana cull training was provided to NiCE participants, educational materials and discussions were held with every registering culler, and each registrant signed an agreement with DoE and with the Cull Manager. After the registration period was finished, it was revealed that 349 cullers, that is persons and businesses, were registered.

Mister Speaker, the contract with the Cull Manager, Cornwall Consulting Ltd., was signed on 19th October 2018. Culling of green iguanas began on the 29th October, and within the first week cullers delivered over 53,000 culled green iguanas to the landfill. That equates to an average of almost 9,000 green iguanas a day, 3,000 more than the requested average of 6,000 per day for the first few weeks.

In the second week of culling activity, cullers delivered another 39,000 plus green iguanas to the landfill. This is more of what we are expecting to see Mister Speaker, an average of approximately 6,000 culled green iguanas per day for six days of culling per week. Going into Week Three, as of Wednesday 14 November, a further 19,000 green

iguanas were culled and delivered to the landfill. Mister Speaker, this makes a total of 112,000 green iguanas that have been culled in the first two and a half weeks of the project, but we need to remember that this is just the tip of the iceberg for the estimated invasive green iguana population on Grand Cayman, and there is still an estimated 90% remaining to be culled.

Mister Speaker, at the start of the Cull Project we had some small issues, which are not totally unexpected with a project of this magnitude, but the DoE and the Cull Manager were able to resolve these issues very quickly. One of the main issues at start-up was the illegal dumping of carcasses, after removal of heads, by irresponsible cullers who found it convenient to store iguanas culled before the program officially started. Heads-only deliveries have now been discontinued and that issue has faded away. We have also received some reports of dangerous / illegal use of air rifles and trespassing on private property, and the DoE are liaising with the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (“RCIPS”) and the Cull Manager to try to identify and revoke registrations of what we believe is a small number of cullers violating the terms of their registration agreements.

We are still in the early days of the cull project Mister Speaker, so we do not yet have detailed information on:

- Number of active cullers per week or month;
- Districts most culled iguanas taken from (e.g. WB, GT);
- Any observed trends with:
 - Cullers teaming up;
 - Efficient cull methods (air rifle vs. snares/sticks);

or any other trends observed in the culling project, however our early indicators appear to show that most of the culled green iguanas are coming from the three districts of West Bay, George Town, and Bodden Town (in no particular order). Our database also shows that there are at least 26 NiCE workers who registered with us that are now active cullers, but there are likely more than that in total who are working in the culling project but not actually registered, perhaps as auxiliaries to a registered culler.

We are now processing the invoice for payment to the green iguana cullers for the first week of the culling project, which will be paid to the cullers on 16 November 2018. Payment will be made every two weeks thereafter in arrears. In that same invoice will be a payment to the Management Company, Cornwall Consulting, for their project

administration, landfill operations, variable cost due to high delivery rates, and expenses related to final setup of the iguana reception site.

Mister Speaker, in order to properly supervise the Cull Manager and the payments being made to the cullers and the manager, the Steering Committee requires that the Cull Manager issues receipts every time a culler brings iguanas to the landfill site. A copy of each receipt is sent to the DoE and one is retained by the Manager. When an invoice is submitted the DoE cross check the receipts with the invoice. The Manager is paid a sum for management of the project which comprises a monthly base rate and a rate for every additional 2,000 green iguanas processed. The Manager also bill us for every green iguana culled, but this amount simply passes through to the cullers.

We should also mention Mister Speaker that there are two security cameras on-site that allow us to monitor the cull project management from time to time, and the DoE has also been conducting spot checks. The steering committee has begun its regular meetings which will continue throughout the project as a means of ensuring regular communication with the Cull Manager.

Mister Speaker, we are receiving more iguanas than initially expected, but this probably reflects the easy culling opportunities, and we expect the green iguana delivery rates to settle down close to our

estimate of 6,000 per day before gradually declining as cullers hit diminishing returns for their efforts.

At this stage Mister Speaker, our strategy looks solid, but it is still very early days to judge whether changes may be needed down the line. The cooperation with the culling project between the DoE and other Government agencies like DEH, RCIPS, and Department of Agriculture is working very well and we expect that this will continue throughout the life of the culling project.

For anyone seeking the latest information on the culling project, they can simply go to the DoE's website at www.doe.ky for the most up-to-date statistics on the green iguana culling project.

All in all Mister Speaker, even though it is early days, we have a good team in place at the DoE, a good project manager, and good partners in our other Government agencies that will see this project through to the end, and I wish to thank them for all of their hard work and dedication with this project to get us to this point. On behalf of the Government, I want them all to know that we appreciate all that they do to make a meaningful difference in our lives and in the protection of our precious environment.

Mister Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to update the Members of this Honourable House on the green iguana culling project, and I eagerly look forward to providing further positive updates at the next sitting of this Honourable House.

Thank you Mister Speaker.