



Public Hearing Summary

Wednesday March 27, 2019

Inquiry Subject:

The examination of the audited financial statements of the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) for the period 2010 to 2012 and the EMA's expenditure and internal controls for the period 2010 to 2018.

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present for the meeting:

- Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie - Chairman
- Mr. Taharqa Obika - Vice-Chairman
- Ms. Charisse Seepersad - Member
- Mr. Adrian Leonce - Member
- Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon - Member

Witnesses who appeared:

The Environmental Management Authority

- Ms. Nadra Nathai- Gyan - Chairman
- Ms. Judy Daniel - Deputy Chairman
- Mr. Vyash Nandlal - Chairman Trustees / Director
- Mr. Hayden Romano - Managing Director
- Mr. Wayne Rajkumar - Manager Technical Services
- Ms. Jenell Partap - Manager Legal Services
- Mr. Dale Cozier - Senior Project Manager
- Ms. Vanessa Young - Financial Accountant

Ministry of Planning and Development

- Ms. Joanne Deoraj - Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Jacqueline Weekes-Penco - Director, Planning Division (Ag.)
- Mr. Kirk Baksh - Accountant
- Ms. Sandra Seecharan - Auditor II

The Environmental Management Authority

- Mr. David Persaud - Environmental Manager,
Environmental Policy and Planning Division

The Auditor General's Department

- Mr. Shiva Sinanan - Assistant Auditor General
- Ms. Annesha Baksh - Assistant Audit Director

Key Topics Discussed:

1. The mandate of the EMA.
2. The status of the EMA's audited financial statements.
3. The objectives of the EMA's 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.
4. The annual reports submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development.
5. The status of rules and regulations including:
 - a. the Draft Waste Management Registration and Permitting Rules; and
 - b. the revision of the Water Pollution Rules 2001.
6. The projects implemented by the EMA including:
 - a. environmental literacy surveys;
 - b. the Recyclable Solid Waste Collection Project (iCARE); and
 - c. the National Climate Mitigation Monitoring Reporting and Verification System.
7. The identification the five major environmental concerns in Trinidad and Tobago as follows:
 - a. waste management;
 - b. air pollution;
 - c. noise pollution;
 - d. land use planning; and
 - e. marine pollution.
8. The EMA's management of environmental crises and the need to strengthen capacity in this regard.
9. Trinidad and Tobago's National Environment Policy (NEP).
10. The link between the NEP and sustainable development, particularly Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.
11. The role of the EMA in ensuring that Trinidad and Tobago meets its commitments under the Paris Agreement.
12. The need to continue public education on environmental issues.
13. Improving the financial stability of the EMA by reducing dependence on government funding.
14. The regulatory role of the EMA.
15. The need to strengthen the EMA's powers of enforcement.
16. The inadequacy of the \$10,000 fine in accordance with the Oil Pollution of Territorial Waters Act Chapter 37:03.
17. The \$20 million fine charged under the consent agreement between the EMA and Petrotrin concerning the 2013 oil spill.
18. The need to enact the Marine Pollution Act.
19. The status of subsidiary legislation to the Environmental Management Act.
20. The EMA's use of a collaborative rather than punitive approach to compliance.
21. The EMA's budgetary constraints, due to the decrease in government subvention.
22. The independence of the EMA.

The Environmental Management Authority

23. The cost of litigation incurred by the EMA.
24. The establishment and balance of the Environmental Trust Fund.
25. The legal authority for the use of the Trust Fund.
26. The EMA's collaboration with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA).
27. The EMA's partnership with public entities to protect biodiversity.
28. The relationship and differences between the EMA and the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA).
29. The EMA's contribution to national development.
30. The distinction between environmental protection and environmental management.
31. The tradeoff between industrial development and environmental preservation.
32. The status of the Ecological Risk Assessment exercise being conducted along the southwest coast of Trinidad.
33. The status of legislation on marine pollution.
34. The pollution of rivers due to oil drilling activities.
35. The pollution caused by oil and gas drilling operations.
36. The status of recruitment of officers for the Environmental Police Unit.
37. The digitization of applications for Certificates of Environmental Clearance (CEC).
38. The status of the CEC application for the Sandals project.
39. The EMA's application to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
40. The systems in place to stop illegal quarrying.
41. Internal auditing staff shortages and the filling of vacancies.
42. The major environmental issues faced in different regions of the country.
43. The possibility of contamination of seafood due to pollution in the Gulf of Paria.
44. The role of the EMA in the promotion of the use of renewable energy.
45. The potential for use of electric and hybrid vehicles in Trinidad and Tobago.

View the Hearing:

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:
<https://youtu.be/K0ibvx0Pcxk>

**PAC Secretariat
March 28, 2019**