Parliament of the Cayman Islands

Parliamentary Question No. 16

Answered on 27th April, 2023 -
Third Meeting 2022-2023 Session - Second Sitting

Parliamentary Question asked by Mr. Joseph Hew,
Elected Member for George Town North
To
The Honourable Sabrina Turner, Minister responsible for
Health & Wellness *and* Home Affairs

QUESTION: Can the Honourable Minister advise whether any improvements have been made to the management of the George Town Landfill – including compacting and covering the waste material – and whether DEH is continuing to regularly douse the landfill with water in an effort to prevent fires?

ANSWER: Madam Speaker, the Department of Environmental Health ("DEH" or the "department") engages in constant improvements as it relates to landfill management. In general terms, site management involves weighing, sorting, and recording data on all materials received at the tipping area. Waste that is landfilled is placed on the mound and compacted with the available equipment.

Madam Speaker due to constant use of the fleet and equipment, the DEH admittedly deals with machine shortage and breakdown, which affects, but does not halt service delivery. The three primary pieces of equipment needed for compacting and coverage, are an Excavator, Compactor and Bulldozer. During episodes of equipment failure, the DEH partners with private subcontractors for equipment rentals. However, I am pleased to advise Madam Speaker, that one new Excavator arrived in October 2022 and is in operation, a new Compactor was delivered on 13th April, and it is expected to be operational within the next four weeks. A new Bulldozer is should be delivered in June. Once all are fully functionally, compaction rates and cover usage will increase, thereby enhancing the DEH landfill operations.

Madam Speaker, the site is being filled in accordance with a tipping plan and cover (marl) is applied when it is available from local suppliers. The department aims to do this monthly, but are challenged given that they are competing with contractors, and may have to wait on an order based on demand for the product.

As it relates to dousing the site, it is not feasible to continually apply water to the landfill with the intention of reducing a fire risk. As such, the DEH does not carry this out this function. As we can appreciate, the site is prone frequent flares even on a small scale, on those occasions the Cayman Islands Fire Service is called upon to intervene. Fire Officers will use water to control an identified outbreak, however these operations stop once the fire has been extinguished and the all clear is given by them.