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BERMUDA SENATE

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

17 JUNE 2026

Sitting number 25 of the 2025/2026 Session
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Sen. The Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, MBE, JP
President

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10:06 AM**

Sitting Number 25 of the 2025/2026 Session

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

The President: Good morning, Senators. And good morning to the listening audience.

The Senate is in session, shall we pray.

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

MOMENT OF SILENCE

[In memory of Sir John W. D. Swan, KBE, JP]

The President: And Senators, as we are standing, we will have a moment of silence in recognition of the late Honourable Sir John W. D. Swan, KBE, JP.

[Members rose and observed a moment of silence.]

[Timer chimed]

The President: Thank you, Senators.
Please be seated.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The President: I call on Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Madam President, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, the 3rd of June 2026, be taken as read.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
Yes? Senator Rogers.

Sen. David Rogers: I do have a couple of objections in the Minutes, mostly around the discussion during the Question Period as it relates to the Standing Orders discussion.

I would like to note that multiple Opposition and Independent Senators expressed . . . how to say? They expressed that the information that was sought was not necessarily in the public domain in completion.

Also, I would like to note that the President did not say that she would *consider* establishing a Commit-

tee; she stated that she *would* establish a Committee. And then finally—

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of information.

Sen. David Rogers: Not right now.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of order.

The President: Point of order.

Sen. David Rogers: What's the point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: The Senator is misleading the House. The President of the Senate does not have the powers to commission a Committee. There must be a motion from the floor for that.

Sen. David Rogers: Okay. I am just responding to what was actually said in the meeting.

The President: Senators, I am just reminded . . . but I did rule on—

Sen. David Rogers: You did.

The President: —at the time and my ruling stands.

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, that's fair.

I just want the Minutes to reflect that Independent and Opposition Senators disputed that the information was in the public domain, and the statement was that [Madam President] would set up a Committee. However, per the information given by the Senator, I'm not sure how that would be reflected in the Minutes, but the statement was that she would set up a Committee, not consider establishing a Committee.

And then, also, I would like noted that the Senators had an issue with the—

[Crosstalk]

Sen. David Rogers: Oh, I'm sorry.

[Pause]

Sen. David Rogers: Basically, that the Senators raised concern related to information released to the media shortly before sitting. It undermines the scrutiny function of the Question Period.

That was the basic sentiment that Senators made during that period. So, those are the three things that I would like added to the Minutes.

The President: Your objection is noted.

But is there any Senator who wants to speak to . . . Senator Tannock, first of all.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Rogers.

My proposal is that we suspend the moving of the Minutes to consider proposed amendments.

It may be that Senator Fubler is correct. However, if that is the case, the Minutes still need to reflect what was actually said and not what the ideal situation would be. So, my proposal is that we suspend moving these Minutes today to review them and hear any proposed amendments and go forward after that.

The President: Madam Attorney General, Minister Wilkerson.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President.

I am not in disagreement with the idea of suspending for review on the latter point, which is how the phrasing of the actual language around the Committee was.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: But in relation to the comments on the Question Period and Senators' views about scrutiny of Parliament, you ruled on that.

The President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: It will not be appropriate to amend the Minutes to reflect something that the President has ruled on as not appropriate for the floor.

That is our position. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Madam Attorney General, and I think your point is taken, the ruling.

[Crosstalk]

The President: Sorry?
Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

I move that the approval of the Minutes, the confirmation of the Minutes of Wednesday, 3 June 2026 be . . . I guess, suspended.

The President: Deferred.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Deferred. Sorry. Deferred until our next meeting for review of any proposed amendments.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.
The Minutes are deferred.
Thank you, Senators, for your comments.

[Minutes of 3 June 2026 deferred.]

MESSAGES

The Deputy Clerk: There are no messages, Madam President.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: There are none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

APOLOGIES

The President: I do want to report that we have had apologies from Vice President John Wight, who is travelling.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President: And further announcements, the first, then, is in the name of Senator Lindsay K. Simmons, the Junior Minister of Home Affairs.
Senator Simmons, you have the floor.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF BERMUDA 2020–2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate, the [Regulatory Authority of Bermuda 2020–2021 Annual Report](#). Senators may access copies on their tablet and/or the Parliament website.

I have another one, Madam President.

The President: Yes, certainly, you can do your second announcement.

COST OF LIVING (ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2026

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate, the [Cost of Living \(Essential Commodities\) Amendment Regulations 2026](#), as made by the Minister responsible for Consumer Affairs, in exercise of the power conferred by section 10E of the Cost of Living Commission Act 1974. Senators may access copies on their tablet and/or the Parliament website.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons, Junior Minister of Home Affairs.

The next announcement is in the name of Senator Lauren F. Bell, the Junior Minister of Economy and Labour.

Senator Bell, you have the floor.

THE PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF COOPERATIVE LEGISLATION IN BERMUDA

Sen. Lauren Bell: Yes, good morning, Madam President and colleagues and listening audience. I hereby present for the information of Senate, [The Proposed Introduction of Cooperative Legislation in Bermuda](#). Senators may access copies on their tablets and/or the Parliament website.

The President: Thank you, Senator Bell.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The President: The first Notice of Motion is in the name of the Junior Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.

Senator Mischa Fubler, you have the floor.

TOURISM INVESTMENT (ROSEWOOD BERMUDA) ORDER 2026

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I hereby present for the consideration of Senate, the [Tourism Investment \(Rosewood Bermuda\) Order 2026](#), proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Tourism under section 3 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017 together with the written agreement of the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

And I give notice that at a later point in the meeting, I will move that the said draft Order be approved.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Fubler, Junior Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.

The second Notice of Motion is also in the name of Senator Mischa Fubler, the Junior Minister of Public Works and Environment.

You have the floor.

COMPASS POINT BUILDING APPROVAL TO PURCHASE

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

Switching hats, I do hereby present the following Motion and give notice that I propose to move the motion at a later point in the meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, in accordance with section 2(1)(a) of the Acquisition of Land Act 1970, this Honourable House approve the purchase of the Compass Point Building together with all land appurtenant thereto, situate at 9 Bermudiana Road, Pembroke.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Mischa Fubler.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: We have one Statement this morning and that is in the name of Senator the Honourable Crystal C. Caesar, the Minister of Education.

Minister Casesar, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to you and the listening public and my fellow senatorial colleagues.

The President: Good morning.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Madam President, today I [rise to update this Honourable House](#) on the progress being made in advancing the transformation of Bermuda's public school system and to outline the deliberate steps being taken to strengthen delivery, stabilise our schools, and improve outcomes for every child.

At the beginning of the current academic year, the Ministry of Education undertook a careful review of the public school system transformation programme. Following that review, we adopted a refined approach—one that balances long-term structural reform with the immediate need to ensure stability, clarity, and focus across our schools.

Our emphasis has been on strengthening the foundations of the system while continuing to advance transformational change. This includes reducing reliance on acting appointments, supporting school leadership, strengthening teaching and learning, and ensur-

ing that school improvement efforts result in measurable gains in student achievement.

This approach recognises an important reality: educational transformation is not a single event or destination. Rather, it is an ongoing process of continuous school improvement and system-wide enhancement. Sustainable change must be thoughtfully paced, evidence-based, appropriately resourced, and centred at all times on the needs and success of our students.

Madam President, I am pleased to report that meaningful progress continues across several key areas of the transformation programme.

First, work continues to advance the development of Signature Learning Programmes at The Berkeley Institute, CedarBridge Academy, and Sandys Secondary School. These programmes will play a central role in reshaping senior school education by creating pathways that better align with students' strengths, interests, aspirations, and future career opportunities. The work is being led by each school's leadership team and supported by dedicated teachers who have been actively engaged throughout the transformation journey.

I am particularly pleased to note the substantial progress made on the new media centre at Sandys Secondary School. This facility will serve as an important resource in supporting the school's signature programmes, particularly those focused on hospitality and tourism, and will enhance opportunities for experiential and industry-connected learning.

Madam President, the Ministry continues to support senior school transformation efforts through targeted investments in staff capacity and programme development. Funding has been provided to support teacher overtime [and] to recognise teacher leaders who are championing school-based transformation initiatives.

Each senior school submitted detailed proposals identifying priority areas requiring further development during the 2025/26 academic year. This investment reflects our commitment to empowering school leaders and educators to develop sustainable, school-specific models of improvement that meet the unique needs of their students and communities.

Secondly, Madam President, at the primary level, implementation of parish school features continues to progress at Francis Patton, Purvis Primary, Harrington Sound, and Elliot [Primary] parish schools. These schools represent far more than the addition of Years 7 and 8. They are intended to strengthen learning communities, expand opportunities for students, and create more engaging, supportive, and developmentally appropriate learning environments. To support this work, dedicated resources, personnel, and equipment have been allocated to each participating school.

I would also like to extend my best wishes to the team of educators from Purvis Primary parish school who will travel to the United Kingdom this sum-

mer to visit an established dual language school. This marks the second international professional learning opportunity provided to support Purvis' dual language programme.

Having recently visited the school (Purvis, that is) and meeting with the educators participating in the study visit, I was encouraged by their enthusiasm and commitment to strengthening bilingual learning opportunities for students. The knowledge and experience gained through this engagement will further enhance the programme and contribute to the school's featured continued development.

Thirdly, Madam President, the Ministry continues to advance the development of a reimagined [special] school model for Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy. This important work is being led by a dedicated local educator with subject matter expertise and is focused on developing a modern, inclusive, and evidence-based framework to support students with specialised learning needs.

To date, this work has produced

- a robust, research-informed foundation aligned with international best practice;
- a position paper outlining infrastructure requirements for the future school;
- meaningful engagement with educators, parents, and multidisciplinary professionals; and
- a collaborative design model that promotes accountability, transparency, and shared ownership.

Madam President, alongside the progress outlined today, the Ministry has taken responsible decisions to recalibrate certain aspects of the wider transformation programme to ensure that implementation remains sustainable, coordinated, and effective.

This is not a reduction in ambition. Rather, it is a strengthening of execution. We are committed to ensuring that changes are thoroughly planned, adequately resourced, and carefully sequenced so that they deliver meaningful and lasting benefits for students, families, and staff.

Accordingly, the Ministry rescinded previously published timelines relating to future school openings and closures beyond September 2025. This decision reflects our commitment to ensuring that infrastructure planning, educational design, workforce considerations, and operational readiness are fully aligned before additional phases of implementation are undertaken.

Put simply, we are choosing thoughtful preparation over rushed implementation. By doing so, we reduce the risk of unintended consequences and increase the likelihood of long-term success.

Madam President, it is also important to address a common misconception regarding school closures and anticipated cost savings. The closure of a school does not automatically generate significant financial savings. Historically, when schools have closed, educators and staff have been redeployed throughout the Bermuda public school system. As a re-

sult, the majority of operating costs, particularly salaries and benefits, remained within the system and are re-distributed rather than eliminated.

The Government has remained committed to retaining educators and supporting continuity within our schools. To date, any staff wishing to remain within the public education system have been accommodated.

However, as student enrolment continues to decline, we must acknowledge that this approach may become increasingly difficult to sustain over the long term. These realities must be carefully considered as we continue to plan for the future of public education.

Madam President, the work underway demonstrates this Government's unwavering commitment not only to achieving the long-term vision of transformation, but also [to] ensuring equity, support, and opportunity for every school, every teacher and every student today.

Transformation is not solely about the future state we seek to achieve. It is equally about strengthening the experiences and outcomes of students currently within our classrooms.

In closing, Madam President, progress is being made. It is deliberate. It is thoughtful. It is grounded in evidence. And most importantly, it is centred on the best interests of Bermuda's children.

We will continue this work with discipline, transparency, and determination. We will remain focused on delivering meaningful improvements in teaching, learning, and student achievement, while building a public education system that prepares every child to succeed in Bermuda and beyond.

The transformation of public education remains a priority for this Government, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to seeing that work through.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Minister Crystal Caesar, Minister of Education.

Moving on with our Orders.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

RETAIL SHOPS (TEMPORARY CUSTOMS DUTY RELIEF FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENTS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2026

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2026

The President: The following public Bills have been received from the Honourable House of Assembly and are now being read for the first time.

Their titles are: [Retail Shops \(Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments\) Amendment Act 2026](#), [Payroll Tax Amendment \(No. 2\) Act 2026](#), and the [Electricity Amendment Act 2026](#).

And, Senators, these Bills will be taken up on our Orders of the Day.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: Senators, we will now entertain questions related to the Statement that has been delivered by the Minister of Education.

Would any Senator care to ask a question?

Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning, colleagues and the listening audience.

I would like to thank the Minister for that timely update on the public school transformation programme. I have a few questions. Firstly, I will start at the top and go down, so I'll start with the signature learning programmes.

The Statement discussed the continued advancement of the development of these programmes. My first question is, how many partners, learning partners, are there on board at each of the schools for each of the signature programmes? And I guess, because I am probably not going to get a number, what is the percentage? You know, are they 50 per cent there? Are they 20 per cent there? What kind of percentage are there actually finalising the development of these programmes?

The President: Thank you.

Was that your only question?

[No audible response]

The President: Minister, do you want to address the question, or you want—

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: I thought that there were going to be others because you did say you were starting at the top, so did you want to go through the remainder?

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Yes. Okay, then that's fine.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Well, so I will have a supplementary to that. In that, you know, we are currently seeing the first year S4s graduating imminently from the first year of these signature learning programmes. How is their learning being impacted by the ongoing development of these programmes?

And second supplementary is, For those students not in the signature learning programme, has there been any change to their academic progress or academic syllabus?

QUESTION 2: PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: And then as I started with public, my second question is, Can the Minister state whether Government remains committed to the two-tier system or whether alternative models are being considered?

QUESTION 3: PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: And my third question, mainly around the primaries because they have the most numbers, but what major infrastructure projects do we anticipate over the summer within the primary education system specifically but across all? And how are they anticipated to impact or better the learning outcomes that we're expecting for our children?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Okay, thank you, Madam President, and thank you to my colleague for the questions.

The signature learning programmes, I believe the question was specifically around how many learning partners there are at each school. To explain the [answer] to all of you, Madam President, there is no specific number that I can give at this time because I wasn't anticipating having a specific number.

However, I can indicate that with the several signature learning programmes we have in each of the schools several learning partners who are assisting with things such as what used to be called day release or work experiences, experiential learning, both at their locations and/or at schools in collaboration with the schools developing the curricula, helping students to have a more hands-on and experiential learning experience.

I can go away and get specific numbers and give that to my colleague but as it stands right now, that number I do not have at hand.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: In terms of what percentage of the signature learning programmes have been completed, that is a difficult question because as I indicated in my Statement, that transformation is ongoing, and as schools continue to develop their signature learning programmes there will be additional portions, pieces that they either adopt or maybe move on differently in terms of how they understand and find that it is either effective or not.

There are several schools, to be clear, Sandys Secondary School because does have a middle school on property. But specifically speaking about the signature learning programmes at Sandys Secondary School, they continue to evolve and adapt. It is in the public domain, each of the different signature programmes as well, because this is still . . . we are in the midst of transformation.

Sandys Secondary School, because it is a newer secondary school, I would say it's still a bit more fledgling than other signature schools in terms of where it is as to how far developed their signature programme is. The others have had a bit more time. As my colleague did indicate, there are students who are graduating this year and who were the first cohort of signature learning programmes. And the question was how has this learning impacted, . . . how has this signature learning programme impacted their learning. And I think it needs to be understood what signature learning programmes and courses are meant to do. It's meant to provide students with a broader based exposure to areas of interest particularly at this stage in their life.

As we all know, we continue to learn and grow. So, students have chosen areas of signature learning that they are interested in. Many of them have graduated with micro-credentials and/or exposure to careers that they either may or may not continue. And so, it has affected their learning by giving them more experiential learning experiences so that now they can make a better decision when they do ultimately decide the areas of study that they either will pursue or areas of work that, who knows, some of them may enter.

Has there been any change to their academic syllabus? I think again this is in the public domain as it pertains to what signature learning programmes, how this will be impacted. The change to the syllabus was that there was a particular portion of credits that students had to earn in their specific signature if that is what they chose and they have a particular level of credits in which they had to pursue in order to graduate. So, yes, it did actually change the syllabus based on their area of interest and what signature they pursued. So, yes, there was change because they had to have exposure to those areas.

The second question was not actually contemplated within this Statement. This was more on . . . and that question was with regard to commitment to a two-tiered system, or whether others are being contemplated. I did not specifically speak to the tiers of education as it stands right now. That is still for consideration

and so that question actually falls outside of this particular Statement.

The third question was around what works are being contemplated over the summer. I do have to explain that, as we all know, a lot of our buildings are ageing and there are several works in several buildings that need to be addressed, from polishing of floors to replacement of windows, to installation of blinds, to painting. There are a myriad of items that need to be addressed in our schools. We are doing so in earnest. Every May there is a walk through that is done to ensure that we have a fresh list of items that may be more acute, others that may be long-standing, and there again, we have that list and we definitely are going to be pursuing that fulsomely and as comprehensively as possible over the summer.

I believe that that answers the majority of questions asked.

The President: Thank you.

I believe Senator Tawana Tannock has questions for you Minister.

QUESTION 1 PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you for your presentation, Minister.

When I read this update, transformation programme update, I did not see any measurable achievements. I heard progress has been made. Progress has been made, but I don't see any way that we've been given to measure that progress. So, I guess my three questions will focus on measurable [metrics].

I note that it states that each senior school submitted detailed proposals identifying priority areas requiring further development during the 2025/26 academic year. Can the Minister please let us know how far each of those proposals have gone with completion of the areas identified. So, for instance, if CedarBridge submitted a proposal and had 12 points, how many of those have been actively worked on and have been achieved and completed or are still in progress?

My second question is regarding the transformational teams, the school transformational teams. How many . . . actually, it's about transformation, in general, I suppose. So, it's . . . I'll leave that one alone.

QUESTION 2: PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. Tawana Tannock: I note that the Minister stated that the timeline had been rescinded because the Ministry is looking at not rushing, but rather delivering results. Do we have a new timeline? If so, where can the public find it? If not, when can we expect to receive one?

QUESTION 3: PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. Tawana Tannock: And then my third question is I note that Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy is having work led by a dedicated local educator. Can you please let us know who that dedicated local educator is and what the timeline for having that up and running is?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

With regard to specific measures in this particular Statement as it pertains to progress that is being made, I think my Statement did make it clear that transformation is an ongoing process and progress will be continuous throughout school years from year to year as we are transforming children's lives. It is not an end goal nor is it a specific deadline.

I did hear Senator Tannock speak about specifics as it pertains to the priorities for certain senior schools and what they were working on for this particular year. Again, that is a very specific question in terms of percentages. Again, that is something that I would need time to collaborate and garner from my technical team. I do not have that at my fingertips but, again, it can be garnered and that is something that we can look to provide once I have gotten that specific information.

The second question was with regard to a new timeline around infrastructure closures and/or openings. I have to be clear that when I speak with regard to school closures and/or openings, there is quite a bit of review and consideration that has to be undertaken. One being school enrolment, the age of a building, also what will be happening in that building. We also have to be future-looking at what we want our schools to look like, what types of infrastructure changes may or may not need to be contemplated.

And so, announcing a specific timeline is forthcoming. I am hesitant to do so at this particular time because I believe that I will be pre-empting the work that my team is doing. So, until such time as we have a more fulsome understanding of the 24 buildings that we have to look at, the future state of enrolment, looking at how we may want our schools to be apportioned going forward.

This is a huge undertaking, and it is not something that can be done, as I stated, in a rushed fashion. We need to do it and make sure it's being done deliberately and thoughtfully.

But I will commit, as I have in the past, that [with] any future closings of any schools we will give that school at least a full year in order for them to prepare for that school closing. I think that is fair because it does give the school communities an opportunity to prepare for that closing and for the community, parents, et cetera, to make decisions around what they'd like to

do if and when a school closes. Announcements will be forthcoming when it is appropriate to do so. I will not be making any pronouncements here today. As I said, it would be pre-empting the work that the technical teams are doing, and I do not believe that is fair to them.

With regard to the individual who is leading the reimagining of Dame Marjorie Bean [Hope Academy], her name is Clindel Lowe. I did mention Ms. Lowe in my Statement when we contemplated the budget earlier this year. We talked about the work that the team is doing there or has done or continues to do. I did outline the specifics around the Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy. Again, as one would know, if they have visited or had an opportunity to see the building, the facility, the programme, has outgrown that building. We also need to ensure that any planning that we do is fulsome and thoughtful, particularly for the population that we have.

That group is informed by at least 35 people who volunteered for different work streams under the Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy. There are specific work areas that they will be contemplating. Infrastructure is one, but also programming is another. That continues because this is a fulsome project. We know that that population requires very sensitive planning, very careful human resources wrapped around. To do it without a fulsome review, again, would be doing them a disservice.

However, they are doing quite a bit of work. They are about to provide some specific updates to me. When I have that information and I believe that it is available, I can bring it for my colleagues to understand where they are. But the work continues in earnest. They are looking at modern day technology, 21st century spaces for that population in terms of human resources and also the equipment and/or tools in order to provide education for that population.

I do hope that I've given some idea of the in-depth work that Ms. Lowe is leading with that team.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Would any other Senators like to ask questions?

Senator Tannock, you have an additional question?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Tawana Tannock: I just have a follow-up. Thank you, Minister, for that explanation.

Is there anywhere where we could find how much progress has been made on the priority areas identified by each senior school?

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

At this particular stage, it's not a public document. This is contemplated within each school building

and led by the leaders and school transformation teams.

When they have had an opportunity to collate that information and are ready to publish it, obviously it will be made available publicly. Again, this is still being contemplated within the school buildings, within the school transformation teams.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Senator Rogers, I believe you have questions of the Minister.

You have the floor.

QUESTION 1: PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. David Rogers: Good morning, listening public. This is David Rogers.

[I] liked the presentation, I thought it was very interesting and informative. The phrasing, "thoughtfully paced," sort of stuck in my craw a bit as the Opposition, or anyone, I don't think, has ever accused the Government of moving swiftly to address the education emergency.

I do like the ideas of signature schools, however. I'm interested in learning more about how kids will be streamed into their future occupation at the age of 12. What does that process look like? I have heard good things about the parish-based support for schools. I'm especially interested in learning about the dual language programme. What language is that in? If you could tell me a little bit more about that programme, I'd definitely be interested in hearing about it and may want to visit it myself. I'm very interested in it. I think that's a missed opportunity. We have a large native Portuguese . . . well, we have a large Portuguese speaking population so [I] would be definitely interested in . . . I know when we were looking for a school for our child, we were looking for some type of language emergency, so this is very good news to hear.

QUESTION 2: PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS UPDATE

Sen. David Rogers: There was definitely a glossing over about the right-sizing that would probably need to be had in the Ministry. I don't think that it makes much sense, at least it's counterintuitive to think that closing schools and right-sizing staffing would make changes to your budget.

Ignoring that . . . if nine years ago we did not expect education to look the way it does now, four years from now, what does the Minister expect the school system to look like? And what are the major, sort of the four major steps to get where she envisions the school system to look like?

The President: Thank you, Senator Rogers.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

I will say that I do take issue with using the term “emergency” in education. I think we need to be very careful when we’re using language around our students. We have to not continue to say that it’s—

POINT OF INFORMATION

Sen. David Rogers: Point of information. The phrase “emergency” came from a parent that I canvassed last week.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

Whilst I appreciate that parents specifically may have emergencies, to say that the entire system is an emergency, I think is unfair, particularly to the hard work that many of the teachers, principals, and school leaders do every day. I believe that if there are emergencies—

Sen. David Rogers: Point of information.

The President: Senator Rogers—

POINT OF INFORMATION

Sen. David Rogers: The phrase was also used by many teachers operating in the—

The President: Senator Rogers, the Minister was speaking.

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, ma’am.

The President: And I think you are out of order to interrupt her response.

Sen. David Rogers: My apologies.

The President: Minister, please carry on.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

Whilst I understand, as I was explaining, that there particularly may be specific issues that parents, teachers have issues with, there is a process in place in order for us to address any concerns that parents have. It’s the schoolteacher, it is the school leadership, it is the department, and then, ultimately, to myself.

And so, again, I think we need to be very careful when we are saying there’s an emergency in education. Again, it does not bode well for those who continue to show up day after day and deliver very good support, work, and education and pedagogy to students.

The question with regard to how we are handling a student being streamed into an occupation at age 12 is a bit of a misnomer. And I guess I should ex-

plain how signatures are chosen, and that is exactly what it is. It is a choice.

Children are introduced to varying different career opportunities which each of the senior schools provide. If there is a specific profession that a student . . . say for instance they decide they want to do, I don’t know, mechanical engineering. They are geared and exposed to a variety at first, and then they make a choice when they get into Year 9 as to what signature they ultimately want to choose. But if they begin that programme and recognise that, you know what, this might not be quite for me, there is a stage along that journey in which they can pivot to an alternate signature and/or enter a general track.

So, we are not pigeonholing students into an occupation. I want to be very clear about that. This is exposure to areas of interest which they may or may not ultimately pursue, if they do pursue that signature, ultimately.

The dual language programme is at Purvis Parish School and the second language that is being pursued there is Spanish. Which, one would know if they did take Spanish (I did not, admittedly), is a very close cousin to the Portuguese language as well. So, I do believe that it is a good choice. But that doesn’t mean that there aren’t other schools who may at some point decide that they would like to adopt this model.

As I mentioned in my Statement, there are teachers who will be attending a dual language programme in the UK. And they also will be able to glean additional information not only for Purvis School, but how other schools, if that is a feature that they would like to adopt, how we can do it in a more measured and informed fashion, also, based on some of the experiences that they have had themselves.

In terms of right-sizing of education, I’m not sure that I used that terminology. I did speak, however, to the misnomer publicly that some have said and I did not speak about any particular group, organisation, [or] facet of the public. I did say that it is, however, generally spoken of in terms of having cost savings around when a school closes or not.

It should be noted that, again, as I did mention, that any school that has closed, any educator who wanted to continue or any staff member who wanted to continue within the Department of Education has had the opportunity to do so. That is what I did state, that we were ensuring that we were not disadvantaging anyone from continuing serving in the Bermuda public school system, if that is what they so choose.

A future state is such that we all know that population is not increasing. It is decreasing year over year. As we note that enrolments are starting to decrease, we will have to consider, if schools close, if we still will be able to absorb everyone who may have been serving in that school capacity. It is just being thoughtful and understanding the landscape of where we are currently and where we would like to go.

Finally, in terms of where I would like for, or what I would like to see in the Bermuda school system in four years' time, I would like to ensure that what we are doing is grounded in high-quality teaching and learning so that the outcomes that we have for our students are high. We have great standards. That we have young people who are confident. We have young people who are able to enter careers in a variety of different professions, those of interest. I want to ensure that the quality of what we are doing is of a high standard.

That is not to say that we do not have some very bright young people who are high achieving. I think in a few weeks' time I will be coming back and be able to speak to some of those young people who have been successful through scholarships. I believe my colleague, Senator Cunningham, has had exposure to quite a few of those young people as well.

Again, this is not to say that we do not do this currently, but I want to ensure that we have a tight ship, and we are ensuring that the quality of education gets the right outcomes for our students. That is what I see in the future.

The President: Thank you, Minister.
Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President.

I just have a potentially quick supplemental to the dual language, which I found interesting. I do not know that I have heard of this before, but given the released Cambridge results that showed many of our primary schools below the international average, especially for English, I just wondered what led to the decision to establish a dual language school in the first place, and whether learning in English and Spanish is expected to increase English. I am interested to see what the research shows, if it is evidence-based.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

That is an interesting question. The dual language programme was chosen through school and community collaboration as to what features . . . Each school has an opportunity when they are going through transition to determine what features it is that they would like to highlight. This was a community collaborative decision around what that particular school wanted to pursue.

Whilst this particular Statement does not necessarily speak to the Cambridge results, I do understand the thinking around if we are doing dual languages, does this mean that another language is suffering. In fact, it is quite the opposite from what I have

been made to understand from educators. The earlier that young people have a second or maybe even a third language introduced, they tend to have better outcomes at the other end of their educational journey. It actually gives them better opportunities.

I think we would all know. Most of us are probably native English speakers, not bilingual or multilingual. I think we all, as adults, probably recognise that having had a second language may have given us additional opportunities.

I actually believe that this is very positive for the school and the community and for these young people. In fact, I was just there yesterday. So, if I could just diverge very slightly, I was able to see these young people engaging in this dual language programme and heard the teacher giving instructions and students responding in Spanish. I had no idea what she was saying until they started doing it. It actually shows that young people are sponges. This is only going to help with the outcomes that we ultimately want to see throughout their educational journey.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Yes. Senator Tannock, you have a follow-up question.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes. This is actually a supplemental question to a response that the Minister gave in response to Senator Rogers. It's really for my own clarity and I suppose I should know this.

This goes back to the signature schools and Senator Rogers' statement that children had to decide pretty early on. I think the Minister responded to say it's comprehensive. They can select subjects.

I should probably know more, but Minister, is it that students, when they graduate from high school, still get a general Bermuda Secondary School Certificate or they get a general Cambridge Certificate and then they have something that shows that they completed a speciality course? Or does it show that they completed high school with a course in hospitality or tourism? How does that work? Thanks.

The President: Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you. (Is it on? Yes. Sorry, I wasn't sure if it was on.)

Thank you, Madam President.

This is a good opportunity to educate my fellow Senators on what it is that students who are in the signature learning programmes will be able to do and pursue.

To answer her question: All of the above. Students have an opportunity to earn micro-credentials in a specific area of learning if that particular area or that signature has such a programme. Say, for instance, it is . . . you can get a certificate in, let's just say AI gen-

eration. And that is a part of their course, and they've been able to pursue that, they can graduate with that. There are also overall graduation requirements that each student has to achieve, be it through a learning programme, or a signature learning programme, or a general track. Children have either chosen a signature programme and there are specific credits and requirements under that track or there is a general track. Both are comparable in terms of what one graduates with.

In addition, students also are able to pursue GCSEs [General Certificate of Secondary Education]—English, Math, Science and other courses, if they so choose.

There are several opportunities. There is a minimum students have to meet in order to graduate from the Bermuda public school system, which includes a general track credit bearing requirement and . . . I'm sorry, I shouldn't say and . . . *or* a credit bearing track for signature learning as well. That's the basic minimum but they can graduate with so much more.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Before we leave the subject, I just want to make sure that there are no other questions from any Senators.

If not, thank you Minister Caesar, Minister of Education. And thank you all Senators who asked the questions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The President: The first Order of the Day is the second reading of the Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026, and that is in the name of Senator the Honourable Crystal Caesar, the spokesperson for Finance [in the Senate].

Minister, when you are ready, you can . . .

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you Madam President. Just getting myself sorted here.

STANDING ORDER 25

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Madam President, I move that the provisions of Standing Order 25 be granted so that the Senate may now proceed with the second reading of the Bill entitled Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Leave granted for the Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026 to be read a second time on the same day as its first reading.]

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you. Madam President, Honourable Members . . . sorry, Madam President, bear with me. Okay.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026 be now read for the second time.

The President: Is there any objection to the second reading?

No objection.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

BILL

SECOND READING

RETAIL SHOPS (TEMPORARY CUSTOMS DUTY RELIEF FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENTS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Honourable Members are requested to now give consideration to the Bill entitled the [Retail Shops \(Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments\) Amendment Act 2026](#).

The Bill proposes to amend the Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Act 2008 to approve an additional five-year period of duty relief in respect of capital goods for use in capital investment schemes for retail shops.

Madam President, Honourable Members will recall that the period of customs duty relief for retail shops was last extended for a period of five years, effective the 1st of April 2021. The period of duty relief expired on the 31st of March 2026. Madam President, Honourable Members will appreciate the importance of the Government's ongoing commitment to supporting Bermuda's retail sector.

I am pleased to inform this Honourable [Senate] that since the introduction of this relief in April 2008, Bermuda's retail sector has benefited by claiming and receiving \$6.9 million in duty relief in respect \$29.4 million worth of goods imported for the renovation and refurbishment of their shops. Madam President, giving a further five years of duty relief encourages further refurbishment and modernisation and provides investor certainty.

By providing a zero per cent rate on capital goods, the Government lowers the barrier for retailers to upgrade their physical stores and technological infrastructure. It also furnishes a predictable fiscal environment, allowing businesses to plan and execute large-scale renovation or expansion projects that may require several years to complete.

Moreover, capital development relief encourages job creation. Capital investment projects such as shop-fitting and construction, directly create demand

for local labour and services, thereby contributing to the local economy.

Madam President, perhaps most importantly, this Bill will enhance competitiveness in the face of the steady growth of global e-commerce.

Honourable Members will be aware that the islanders enjoy shopping online. And as a direct consequence, Bermuda's retailers face robust competition from a myriad of e-tailers. Online sales currently make up over 21 per cent of all retail transactions, with that number expected to approach a quarter of all global retail sales during the next few years.

Our local retailers must contend with high operating costs compared to international online platforms. Maintaining relief on capital investments will help local shops reduce their overheads, allowing them to compete more effectively on both price and shopping experience.

Madam President, the measures of the Bill form part of the Government's continuing commitment to supporting Bermuda's retail sector. Over the next five years, this duty concession will be of significant benefit to local brick-and-mortar shops and, by extension, the general economy of Bermuda.

Madam President, this Government intends for the extended period of the duty concessions for retail shops to have been deemed to have come into force on the 1st of April [2026] to provide for uninterrupted retail shops duty relief for a full five-year period through the 31st of March 2031.

I will comment further during any questions that are received.

Thank you, Madam President.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Senators, before I open the floor for you to ask questions, I would just like to acknowledge the presence of James Amos.

[Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026, second reading debate, continuing]

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?

An Hon. Senator: I don't think her microphone is on.

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on this—

[No audible response]

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Minister for her brief.

The Opposition is pleased to support this Bill. I think it's obviously a programme that has been long-running, but the one that we have always supported.

We note our retail businesses, and small businesses, for that matter, are under real pressure as they compete with . . . I've never heard of e-tail, but I thought that was—

[Laughter]

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: —e-tail, online retail, and obviously, you know, Bermudians going abroad, overseas shopping. But I think this obviously not only gives that reduction to our retailers, but also, as mentioned, gives a bit of a boost to the economy for those actually doing the construction, supplying, whatever it is. I am also glad to see that it's being continued so there's no gap from 1 April.

I do have a question about whether the Ministry might commit to a mid-year review, mid-term review, so say, I don't know, 30 months in or something, what types of businesses are benefiting? Are they reaching the smaller independent retails that, you know, I think this Bill aims to serve rather than just the larger stores that we see?

And a second question is whether the Ministry or Minister can confirm whether the definition of "eligible capital goods" has been renewed or reviewed recently and whether it captures modern retail needs: point of sale systems, e-commerce, infrastructure that might be needed, energy efficiency upgrades. Or whether it remains focused on the more traditional shop-fitting and construction materials. But I think ultimately this is the practical targeted relief, that support for the retail sector that we're looking for.

We would simply add our voice to the call for Government to ease the cost of doing business further, potentially looking at duty payment timings to align with the cash flow realities of some of our smaller retails, but in general we support the Bill. Thank you.

The President: [Microphone not on.]

Senator Rogers, you have the floor.

Sen. David Rogers: Once again, I would like to reiterate our support for the Bill. So, we've heard that the Government has foregone about \$6.9 million, if I got that correct. How does that compare to the number of refits? Does the Ministry have any data on the number of companies that have refitted, number of shops, what they've bought? Just general information to sort of understand how companies are benefiting from this programme.

[No audio]

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Okay, Madam President, I have conferred with the technical team and do

have answers to some of the questions with regard to this.

[I am] happy to hear that it's supported. I think we all would agree that the support is vital for the brick and mortar stores. I am one of those that although if I absolutely have to, I will shop online, but I like to look, touch and feel. So, I actually prefer to go into a store-front, try on, and have a look and then have them tell me how good I look in it, et cetera.

[Laughter]

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: When you are online you don't have anybody doing that. But this is . . . I think this is a good. It's great because I think everything has cycles. I do believe that online shopping is here to stay, but I also believe that brick and mortar still has a place in our economy. And so, I believe that by extension it does assist with those construction companies that may be assisting with any additional changes that these stores are looking to make to update their facilities.

With regard to the first question around mid-year review, we actually are producing some full statistics on which can be reported out later on. So again, very specific-type questions which aren't always anticipated, so we don't have that at hand, but there are full statistics being gathered and that can be reported on at a later time.

With regard to the definition of "eligible capital goods," the current definition is deemed to be significantly broad that it will contemplate modern day-type definitions. So, at this time it has not been considered for review.

And the number of companies that have applied for retrofitting, et cetera, well, because we are now, what is this? . . . June and it expired as at 1 April 2026, there was 22. But obviously further detail can be provided in due course. But I'm assuming that, and hoping and encouraging, brick and mortar stores to take advantage of this so that they can remain current and get that foot traffic to come into the store, draw them in so that they can have the experiences that I spoke about that I actually prefer when I am doing my shopping.

So, I believe that I've answered all of the questions, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

With that, I move that the Bill entitled (sorry, it's a long one) Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026 be now read for the second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection—

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled, Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026 be now read for the third time.

The President: Is there any objection—

BILL

THIRD READING

RETAIL SHOPS (TEMPORARY CUSTOMS DUTY RELIEF FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENTS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

And Madam President, I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill do now pass. Is there any objection to that motion?

[Motion carried: The Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Amendment Act 2026 was given a third reading and passed.]

The President: [Microphone off]

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Madam President, your microphone is not on. Your microphone . . .

The President: I didn't realise it was off.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: You were really low. Yes, thank you.

The President: We will now move on to a second item on our Orders of the Day, and that is the second reading of the Payroll Tax Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026. And that is in the name of Senator, the Honourable Crystal Caesar as well, again, Spokesperson for Finance [in the Senate].

Minister, when you're ready, you can present your second Bill.

STANDING ORDER 25

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Madam President, I move that the provisions of Standing Order 25 be granted so that the Senate may now proceed with the second reading of the Bill . . . (I'm sorry, excuse me, Madam President. Hold on one second.) entitled, the Payroll Tax Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Leave granted for the Payroll Tax Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026 to be read a second time on the same day as its first reading.]

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President. I move that the Bill entitled Payroll Tax Amendment Act (No. 2) 2026 be now read for the second time.

The President: Is there any objection to the second reading?
No objection.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

BILL

SECOND READING

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT ACT (NO. 2) 2026

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Madam President, the Bill before this Honourable House is the [Payroll Tax Amendment \(No. 2\) Act 2026](#) which establishes a simplified payroll tax structure for ridesharing permit holders.

Madam President, the introduction of ridesharing services under the Motor Car (Ridesharing) Amendment Act 2026 represents a significant modernisation of Bermuda's transportation sector. As part of this reform, it is essential that the payroll tax system applicable to ridesharing permit holders is clear, fair and administratively efficient.

Madam President, ridesharing operators are individual service providers whose income is derived from providing ridesharing services directly to passengers through approved despatching platforms. It would therefore be administratively burdensome to require these individuals to register as employers or self-employed persons, file quarterly payroll tax returns, or calculate tax base on standard payroll tax bands.

This Bill establishes a flat annual payroll tax of \$400 payable by the ridesharing permit holder. This fixed amount replaces all employer and payroll tax obligations related to ridesharing remuneration. The payment must be made before a ridesharing permit is issued, ensuring clarity and certainty for both the permit holder and the Government.

Madam President, this approach aligns with the Government's commitment to creating a modern, accessible and equitable regulatory framework for ridesharing. It ensures that ridesharing permit holders contribute fairly to the tax system while avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens.

The transitional provision ensures that persons who received a ridesharing permit immediately before the commencement date of this Act will have a grace period until 31 July to make the required payment, avoiding any disruption to the launch of the ridesharing service.

Madam President, this Bill supports the broader transportation reform initiative and ensures that the payroll tax system is appropriately aligned with the new ridesharing industry.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?
Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith, you have the floor.

Sen. Tarik Smith: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to my Senate colleagues and listening audience.

I just have one question . . . but something to say. First, let me declare my interest as a taxi operator.

To be clear, from the onset, of course, I was not in favour of ridesharing. And the reason was very straightforward. I think it was for taxi drivers, the fairness of the operators. Taxi drivers, like I said, we are very heavily regulated, and we have licensing obligations.

This Bill is an important step, Madam President, and it makes it clear, and I can appreciate the fact that the Government said if you don't pay for your payroll tax there will be no permit, and [with] no permit, you can't operate. So, I can get behind that.

But in fairness, I do not see . . . and I said previously when speaking on this about heavyweight boxing. A heavyweight fighter versus a lightweight fighter doesn't kind of work. I see in the legislation it says that the rideshare operators will be allowed to opt out after six months. I guess my question to the Minister is, Why is it that taxi operators and other public service vehicle operators are required to commit for a full year, whereas rideshare operators can opt out after six months and get a return on their payroll tax, I guess, of \$200. Taxi operators can't opt in and out. I mean, are they allowed to just test, and I guess if my business doesn't work, the Government is giving them, I guess, a fail-safe to get back that \$200.

So that would be my only question to the Minister. Can she explain why they are given this six-month option where taxi operators and others are not allowed for this six-month option?

Thank you, Madam President, and Minister, for your answer.

The President: Thank you, Senator [Tarik] Dunbar Smith.

Would any other Senator care to ask a question?

Senator Tawana Tannock, you have the floor, only because you put your hand up first.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

My question is why are rideshare operators being asked to pay less payroll tax than taxi drivers who have put out a greater outlay to support this business? They have greater standards to uphold, and yet we are asking people who have not put the same amount of time and investment into their business to pay less for payroll tax. I think that that is patently unfair to taxi drivers, and I'm steadfast against it.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock.

And, Senator Cunningham, you did indicate you wanted to speak. You have the floor.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President.

I'm also talking about the \$400 flat rate that is obviously being added to the payroll tax rates, but I just wanted to see if the Ministry could confirm whether there was a mechanism to review and adjust that rate over time.

Obviously, we don't know how that industry (if you will call it that) will mature, but whether that \$400 figure could change in the future.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

And Senator Tannock, you have a second question or comment?

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, I do, and it's just to the point of administrative burden. When we talk about administrative burden, and that's why there's this flat rate, which I can appreciate, and I know that taxi drivers do benefit from a flat rate, but what could be more administratively burdensome than having people come back after however many months to say, *I didn't like it, I want my money back?* I mean, to me, that's creating chaos.

So, I would like to know why the decision was made when it's not offered to minibus drivers, it's not offered to taxi drivers, to offer this type of provision, and how will that ease the administrative burden?

[Pause]

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Madam President, just for yourself and my fellow colleagues and the listening audience, I'm being supported remotely, and there is a 14-second delay, so I am awaiting the response from technical officers on the questions that have been posed.

The President: Thank you, Minister. Yes, we understand you are awaiting the response from the technical officers

So, Madam Attorney General, Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning—

The President: Good morning.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: —to you and the listening public. I think this is my first time speaking this morning.

I have been listening while my colleague is waiting for technical officers. We should understand that this is coming as a finance Bill,—

The President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: —in relation to the payroll tax. The questions being asked by some of the Senate colleagues this morning seem to relate to the policy around rideshare itself, which is not appropriate for the Minister speaking for Finance, because she's here, obviously, representing the payroll tax.

So, Madam President, I am not certain if maybe Senator Tannock might not have been in the Chamber when the legislation was debated, and there was a clear understanding that—

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Sen. David Rogers: Point of order. Point of order.

Both questions were specific about the \$400 tax. I don't believe—

The President: Senator Rogers.

Sen. David Rogers: I believe the Honourable Minister is misleading the House.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: With respect, you haven't listened to what I've had to say, so you can't determine if I'm misleading the House or not.

I am saying that the question asked by Senator Tannock may have been because she wasn't in the House, in this Chamber, when the policy was debated. Because I know that Senator Tannock is very astute, and she remembers things that she has heard. So, it may be possible that she missed the point that rideshare is seasonal. Clearly, that's the reason that it has a prorated fee, and the opportunity for people to opt out.

It has started . . . and there's an open period for people to sign up. We understand that this is meant to be ancillary, and so it's . . . We covered the regulations as being seasonal. I just wanted to be sure that [Senators] didn't miss that point. Because the comments

seem to be odd, understanding that it's meant to be seasonal work. Why would we be comparing it with taxi drivers who drive all year when rideshare operators can only operate during the season?

The President: There are several Senators who want to speak.

We'll start, first of all, with Senator Cunningham.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President.

I will just give a little background on my employment history in international business, where 1 June is historically the start of hurricane season, and companies in Florida will pay for an annual premium for their hurricane insurance, which, generally speaking, will only come into effect in hurricane season, which is between the 1st of June and the 30th of November. They do not get a discount for 50 per cent, because hurricane season is only for six months of the year.

I would like to know . . . so, a rideshare driver can pay the upfront payroll tax and then at the end of the season can get the rest back, then that suggests to me that that's a \$200 a year payroll tax rather than a \$400, if it's just seasonality.

The President: Minister Wilkerson, you have . . . no.

I think Senator Cunningham has spoken for the others.

Yes, Senator Tannock, you have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Madam President—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Sorry. I think I will. Clearly, there's a math problem going on across the aisle. Right?

If you're getting half your money back because you only operated for half the time, I'm not sure how you make the assumption that you have had a full ride and you pay half the amount.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Senator Tannock did you want to make . . . You have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes. Thank you, Madam President, and I wanted to thank the Attorney General for her acknowledgement of my astuteness, which I too agree with.

[Laughter]

Sen. Tawana Tannock: But I think when it comes to the seasonal aspect of the rideshare, one of . . . I was in the debate, and I vehemently opposed it. But one of the . . . I think one of the issues that I had or raised was (and don't quote me on this) was the fact that the permit could be extended beyond the season based on de-

mand. So, we had it where there is no actual capped seasonal requirement for them to only operate.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President.

The President: Minister. Madam Attorney General. Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: The piece of legislation in front of us is in relation to payroll tax, not the permit, not the regulations.

The President: Mm-hmm. Point taken. Thank you.

We'll wait for the Minister to respond.
Minister Caesar.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

It appears that the technical officers agree with the Attorney General. These do not appear to be payroll tax-specific questions.

And if there are payroll tax-specific questions on this piece of legislation, I would be happy to entertain them. But this is more on policy around ridesharing rather than the actual tax that is being contemplated on ride sharing at this time.

And as you have indicated, if there are any additional questions, and I believe there aren't anymore, Madam President, I believe that that ends the substantive debate specifically on the payroll tax around being contemplated for ridesharing vehicles.

The President: Therefore, Minister, it leaves you to pass your Bill.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Payroll Tax Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026 be read for the second time.

The President: Is there any objection to the second reading?

No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Madam President, I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2026

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Payroll Tax Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?

No objection.

Sen. the Hon. Crystal Caesar: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill entitled Payroll Tax Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026 do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection. The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Payroll Tax Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Minister Crystal Caesar, spokesperson for Finance [in the Senate], and thank you to all Senators.

We will now move on to our third item on the Orders of the Day, and that is the second reading of the Electricity Amendment Act 2026, and this is in the name of Senator Lindsay K. Simmons, the Junior Minister for Home Affairs.

Senator Simmons, you can present your Bill when you are ready.

STANDING ORDER 25

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the provisions of Standing Order 25 be granted so that the Senate may now proceed with the second reading of the Bill entitled Electricity Amendment Act 2026.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

[Motion carried: Leave granted for the Electricity Amendment Act 2026 to be read a second time on the same day as its first reading.]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled Electricity Amendment Act 2026 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to the second reading?

No objection.

BILL

SECOND READING

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I am pleased to present this Bill entitled the [Electricity Amendment Act 2026](#) for consideration of this Honourable [Senate]. This Bill amends the Electricity Act 2016 to strengthen Bermuda's energy planning framework to provide a statutory process for the suspension [and] reconstitution of the Integrated Resource Plan, a process . . . where the public interest requires it and to make consumer affordability protections an expressed requirement of the Integrated Resource Plan.

Madam President, electricity is woven into Bermudian life. It keeps the lights on for the senior in Somerset, the refrigerator running for families in Pembroke, and the doors open for the small business in St. George's. When the cost of power rises, the increase impacts what can go on the kitchen table, in the corner shop, and in the monthly budget of every household on the Island.

This Government was elected in 2025 on a mandate of equality and tangible progress. The price, the reliability, and the fairness of electricity sit at the centre of that mandate. Madam President, the world has reminded us repeatedly and most recently what energy insecurity costs. The war in Ukraine drove global fuel prices to historic highs and pushed households across the world into an energy crisis. Attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea disrupted the routes on which traded fuels depend. Tensions in the Middle East move oil markets within hours. Bermuda imports virtually every drop of fuel we burn to generate electricity. Each of these shocks crosses the ocean and arrives through the fuel adjustment on every bill in Bermudian homes. We lived through this in 2022 and 2023 when global fuel [volatility] drove electricity costs sharply upward, and our families carried the burden. For an Island of 21 square miles, more than 600 miles from the nearest coastline, energy security is a national security.

Madam President, the countries that get their energy transition right gain far more than cleaner power. They stabilise rates and give households and businesses the certainty to plan and to invest. They build local skills, attract capital, and harden their grids against storms that grow stronger each season. They convert vulnerability into resilience and dependence into self-determination. That is the prize to be won through deliberate planning conducted in the public interest under democratic accountability.

Madam President, the Integrated Resource Plan, commonly referred to as the IRP, is the principal

tool used to guide Bermuda's electricity future. It informs decisions on generation, renewable energy, system reliability and long-term energy costs. It is the framework through which Bermuda's energy transition is planned, sequenced, and costed. A sound IRP is the difference between a transition that lowers bills and one that raises them.

Successive Governments have made promises to the people of Bermuda about their energy future. In 2015, the National Electricity Sector Policy set a target of 38 per cent renewable generation by 2035 and laid the foundation for the Electricity Act 2016. In 2019, the Regulatory Authority approved the IRP that charted an accelerated course towards approximately 85 per cent renewable generation by 2035.

In the 2021 Speech from the Throne, the Government committed to regulations addressing the cost of fuel [surcharges] for the electricity and to [bring] legislation enabling renewable energy developers to test their technologies in Bermuda.

In the 2023 Speech from the Throne, delivered weeks after a 20 per cent increase in electricity fees, the Government committed to advance amendments to the regulatory legislation and the Electricity Act 2016 to provide for greater public protections in price determination and implementation. And in the 2025 Speech from the Throne, the Government committed to limit the categories of recoverable expenses that may be passed on to consumers, to empower the Regulatory Authority to implement fair pricing on retail electricity tariffs and to review the requirement for mandatory connection to the grid.

Madam President, it is accepted that there has been no comprehensive refresh of the National Electricity Sector Policy since 2015. Because this is accepted, it is [equally] met with the determination that it is always the right time to set the path on track.

This year, the Government advanced that work. The National Electricity Sector Policy 2026 now states clearly and publicly the policy position on the electricity sector: affordability, equality, reliability, and least-cost planning. The question before this [Senate] as presented in this amendment is whether the current planning machinery of the sector can deliver that policy. The promises of 2021, of 2023, and of 2025 cannot be made true through the current IRP process built on the assumptions of another era and misaligned with the policy of the elected Government.

Madam President, Honourable [Senators] may ask why we have been unable to deliver. Part of this answer lies in the architecture itself. Under the current framework, the IRP is authorised by the utility. The utility is a commercial enterprise. It answers lawfully to its shareholders, and it plans accordingly to its commercial interests. The Regulatory Authority then refines what the utility submits and the Government, which promised the people relief and a better standard of living, holds the responsibility without the statutory means. Three

entities, three different objectives, one bill at the end of the month paid by the Bermudian household.

It should be declared that none of these institutions have acted improperly. The structure itself produced the misalignment, and this Bill begins to correct it by ensuring regulatory accountability to the public interest.

Madam President, Honourable [Senators] should also understand what this planning machinery costs the people it serves. The Regulatory Authority is funded by regulatory fees recovered from the sector, and its own budget states that the fees paid by the utility are recoverable from the electricity ratepayers.

For the 2025/26 fiscal year, the Authority's published electricity budget stands at approximately \$4.5 million, an increase of 52 per cent on the prior year, with nearly \$1.6 million allocated to the consulting services in support of the work that includes the development of the IRP. The regulatory fee charged on every kilowatt hour sold has risen from 0.545 cents to 0.855 cents. And the utility may recover it through a dedicated charge on the bill. On the other side of the ledger, the utility's own cost for preparing the IRP proposed, including external consultants and modelling, sits within the regulatory cost base on which tariffs are built. Every dollar of planning on both sides is ultimately a ratepayer dollar.

The analysis underpinning the first IRP estimated that a two-year delay in needed generation would have cost ratepayers some \$87.8 million in temporary power alone. A poorly constructed plan locks in generation choices, fuel exposure, and capital commitments for decades. And every misjudgement is paid for month after month on a household bill.

Madam President, now consider the time. Bermuda's first IRP moved from the utility's proposal in February 2018 to an approved plan in 2019, a cycle roughly of 18 months. The current cycle does tell a different story. The Regulatory Authority requested the proposal from the utility in October 2022. The deadline for that proposal was extended with ministerial consent to November 2023. The proposal arrived in May 2024. Public consultation was still being extended into September 2025.

When the Minister was appointed to this office in February 2025, more than two years into the cycle, there was no approved plan. And there is none today. This Bill is not a sudden shift. It addresses a process that was already delayed, already out of date and already detached from the promises successive Governments have made to the people of this country.

Madam President, without a pause this Government is denied the means to deliver on its promises. That is the operational truth and this Bill resolves it. Some have suggested that more money should be spent to finalise the current IRP. The argument has been weighed and rejected. Spending further resources to complete a plan that is misaligned with the Government's stated policy and that runs contrary to

affordability does not serve the public interest. Good money should follow good planning. The responsible course is to pause, to reconstitute the process correctly and to plan once: properly in the public interest.

Accordingly, Madam President, the Bill will make the following amendments:

1. It would define the Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) process as a process by which an Integrated Resource Plan is requested, submitted, and considered for approval under the Electricity Act 2016.
2. It will insert a new public interest power, enabling the Minister, after consultation and where the statutory test is met, to make an order for the suspension and reconstitution of all or part of the IRP process.
3. It will require the Regulatory Authority and the transmission, distribution, and retail licensee to consider consumer affordability in the integrated resource planning and decision-making, and to ensure that affordability protections form an integral part of the Integrated Resource Plan.
4. It will provide for the resumption and approval of an Integrated Resource Plan following any suspension and reconstitution of the IRP process.
5. It will amend the Regulatory Authority Act 2011 to recognise that the Minister may have public interest powers in respect of a regulated industry sector where those powers are specified in the Act or sectoral legislation.

Madam President, [new] Part 8A allows the Minister after consulting the Regulatory Authority and the TD&R [Transmission, Distribution and Retail] licensee to make an order to suspend and reconstitute any part of the IRP process but only where the statutory test is met. That test requires the Minister to be satisfied that continuing the IRP process would pose a risk to the reliability, sustainability, or affordability of the energy supply or that action is necessary to ensure consistency between the Government policy and the proposed IRP. The Minister must also be of the opinion that continuing the process would be contrary to the public interest.

Madam President, because this power is significant, the Bill includes important safeguards. An IRP suspension order must state the reasons for the order, the period of the suspension, the part or parts of the IRP process that may be reconstituted, and any directions necessary for the Regulatory Authority to give effect to the order. The order will be subject to negative resolution procedure, and the period of suspension cannot exceed two years. The Bill will also ensure continuity. The Integrated Resource Plan already in operation will remain in effect until another IRP is approved and published. This avoids uncertainty and ensures that Bermuda's electricity planning framework continues to operate during the period of review.

Before the suspension expires, the Regulatory Authority must issue a notice setting out when the IRP process will resume, which parts of the process have been reconstituted, the next steps to be taken, and any guidance relating to resumption.

The Bill provides for a right of appeal to the Supreme Court for the TD&R licensee or any other person aggrieved by the making of an IRP suspension order. Madam President, some will call this statutory ministerial interference, but this Bill actually builds a clear national policy, a cohesive planning process answerable to the policy, and a legislative framework that defines specific circumstances in which a Minister may act.

Good governance is not the absence of ministerial responsibility. It is the responsibility exercised through law in the open, within limits set by the honourable [legislature]. A Ministerial directive on affordability issued last year was not materially enough to reduce regulatory operations. This power is tailored to its purpose.

It applies to one process only: the IRP process as defined in the Act and may be exercised only after consultation with the Regulatory Authority and the TD&R licensee. It may be exercised only where the statutory test is met, [poses] a risk to the reliability, sustainability, or affordability of the energy supply or the inconsistency between government policy and the proposed plan. And in either case, a Minister must be of the opinion that continuing the process will be contrary to the public interest. Every order must state its reason, its duration, and the parts of the process affected. No suspension may exceed two years. Every order is subjected to the negative resolution procedure of this honourable [legislature].

The IRP in operation remains, in effect, rogue. The Regulatory Authority must publish a notice before the process resumes. Any aggrieved person may appeal to the Supreme Court. Let me also be precise about what this Bill does not do. It does not broaden the Minister's general powers of direction under the Electricity Act 2016. These provisions stand as Parliament wrote them. This Bill creates one narrow purpose-built mechanism for the one defined circumstance and nothing more.

And let the record state a further fact. No business or enterprise is economically throttled by it. No investment sits frozen on its account. What is at stake is simpler and larger, whether the Government of Bermuda possesses the appropriate mechanisms to deliver what it promised to the people who elected it.

Madam President, the Bill right-sizes a planning process. It is tabled because of today's circumstances, but it is built to outlast them. It will be available to this administration and to further administrations and future administrations that carry a mandate from the Bermudian people, so that the elected Government of the day can steer the energy sector in the public interest. That is how a democracy should govern its essential services.

Madam President, from the commencement of this Act, the pace and the direction of Bermuda's energy transition will no longer be advanced by any single entity. The transition will evolve in alignment with the policies of the Government the people choose. It will consider and include all people—the households installing rooftop solar, the renter who depends entirely on the grid, the senior on a fixed income, and the small business watching its operational costs. Their interests, expressed through the democratic mandate, will set the standard against which every plan is tested—affordability, reliability, and fairness.

Madam President, this Bill opens the next phase of Bermuda's energy reform. In the months ahead, the Government will continue consultation on amendments that strengthen the regulatory ability to ensure fair retail electricity pricing and greater accountability within the sector.

This includes reviewing the categories of costs and expenses that may properly be passed on to the consumer, and ensuring the inefficiency and imprudent expenditure cannot simply become a burden carried by Bermudan ratepayers. The people of Bermuda expect a system that rewards efficiency, innovation, and responsible planning. They should never bear unnecessary costs without scrutiny.

Madam President, the Government will also improve the coordination between the Department of Energy, the Department of Planning, and the Regulatory Authority so that Bermuda can properly forecast, monitor, and manage the growth of distributed generation across the Island while protecting grid stability, systems reliability, and consumer affordability. Bermudians are already investing in rooftop solar, battery storage, and cleaner technologies, and our regulatory systems must evolve with them.

Madam President, the Government further intends to explore amendments relating to fees and tariffs and mechanisms that provide greater certainty and fairness for those investing in renewable energy technologies and to continue reviewing the mandatory utility connection framework so that a more diverse energy future can be examined responsibly. Policy certainly must form a part of encouraging cleaner energy adoption.

Madam President, all of this work will proceed and all energy programmes of stakeholder engagement and development . . . household installers, the utility, independent producers, the Regulatory Authority, environmental organisations, and the business community will each have a seat at the table. The Government will weigh every contribution against a single measure: what serves Bermuda and its people.

Madam President, the people of Bermuda expect an electricity system that is sustainable and decision-making that is affordable and fair. This Government rejects the narrative that Bermuda is too small to modernise its energy system or too limited to pursue greater energy resilience. Affordability and sustainabil-

ity are connected objectives, and every reform we advance is rooted in one principle: Bermuda's energy future must serve the people of Bermuda first.

Madam President, brick by brick, reform by reform, this Government is building a modern energy framework that is more [accountable], more sustainable, more consumer focused, and more resilient to the global pressures that increasingly test island nations. This work will take time, and the direction is clear. We are building an energy future that Bermuda's next generation can inherit with confidence. This Bill is a practical and necessary step in that work.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons, Junior Minister for Home Affairs.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITORS

The President: And before I open the floor for Senators to respond to this Bill, I would just like to acknowledge and welcome the Honourable Alexa Lightbourne, the Minister of Home Affairs, as well as Mr. Adrian [Dill], the Director of Energy, who are both in the Gallery. Welcome to you both.

[Electricity Amendment Act 2026, second reading debate, continuing]

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Junior Minister. I thought that was going to be a lot longer of a brief, given the size of her file, but thankfully not.

[Laughter]

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: But just to declare that the Opposition, we in the Opposition, me and . . . myself and my colleagues oppose this Bill, not because we disagree with the goal of lower, fairer electricity costs for every Bermudian, which I think we share that with Government Members on the other side of the aisle, but because we believe that this legislation chooses the wrong mechanism to achieve that goal and ultimately could potentially make things worse, not better, for the ratepayer.

This Bill seeks to give the Minister power to suspend the integrated resource planning process, the IRP, and this is the technical framework through which Bermuda's long-term energy future is being planned. This suspension could be up to two years and ultimately it could reconsider deadlines or obligations that have already been set.

And we believe these are significant powers for many reasons. One is that the Minister can suspend based on public interest and the public interest is undefined. It has to be . . . you know, it poses a risk to the reliability, sustainability or affordability and we believe that these are broad subjective thresholds and there's no independent verification as to whether that test has been met.

We also believe it bypasses the Regulatory Authority who are precisely there to provide that independent expert oversight of the electricity sector and to be insulated from short-term political pressures. And we believe that this Bill specifically and quite materially reduces that insulation.

Next up, we in the Opposition, the One Bermuda Alliance, believe that we have already proposed a fairly good solution, or better solution, and that is on giving the Regulatory Authority more teeth or more statutory teeth to actually enforce affordability protections on its own. We would suggest that we amend the Regulatory Authority Act to give them greater powers to do their job properly. And I believe the Government has acknowledged that greater teeth is required. I will say that if that legislation was coming before this Chamber today, we would be supportive of it.

Another point to note is that the cost is, you know, the IRP process is expensive. The costs are there whether we suspend it or not, and it potentially could compound those costs because work already done may need to be redone. Technical inputs might become stale so they might have to be redone with consultants, and I believe a two-year delay could have a large hit to our ratepayers.

Moreover, I think the power that this gives is not just for the current administration but it could potentially be for future Governments and obviously we do not know who Ministers may be tomorrow, let alone in the future. And we may have, you know, a well-intentioned Minister today with a clear policy output but we don't know where that's going to be in the future. And I think that's the importance of having the Regulatory Authority with the independence to create these opportunities.

So with that, I have two questions. And one is can the Junior Minister confirm whether the Minister would intend to issue an IRP suspension order following the passage of this Bill, and which parts of the IRP process the Ministry or Minister intends to suspend and on what basis that public interest test has been satisfied? And secondly, has the Attorney General's Chambers or any other independent legal advisor assessed the litigation risk arising from a suspension order, and will that assessment be made available?

I think in closing we all want the same destination of affordable, reliable, sustainable electricity for every household and business on our Island. But we disagree that this is the right way to go. And the Minister should not be able to suspend the current IRP process. We believe that an independent body should be in

charge, and that is exactly what the Regulatory Authority is there to do.

If they bring that to the Senate, we will support it. But as it stands, we will not.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator Tannock, you have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you Madam President.

I noted that Senator Simmons mentioned that public interest requires the suspension of the IRP. Can the Senator specify what public interest has been demonstrated to require the suspension of an IRP? That's my first question.

My second is if the Government proposes to suspend IRPs—and for the listening public IRPs are strategic blueprints that basically outline how a country will manage its energy. Right? Future energy goals, energy cost. If the Government is suggesting that IRPs are suspended and can be suspended, what will the Government be producing to fill that vacuum to demonstrate how whatever their suspension is, is meeting those needs and who will be preparing that?

Then my third one is the Regulatory Authority [RA] also states that their remit is to ensure that energy development and consumption in Bermuda is done with the public interest in mind, and they have fairness, transparency, accountability, all of these things that they use for the public interest. We already have a body that says it's working in the public interest. Is it the Government's opinion that the Regulatory Authority is not sufficiently acting in the public interest or at all?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator David Rogers, you have the floor.

Sen. David Rogers: Good day, Bermuda. So, I am not in support in adding more powers to the Minister's already considerable powers. Mainly because of . . . I have, maybe I have a little bit of a trust issue. I am actually saddened to see this Bill brought here today. Because I know the individuals on the other side of the aisle actually have a commitment to democracy and separation of powers. But what this Bill would essentially do is de-tooth the RA.

What's the point of having experts? What's the point of having expertise? What's the point of having technical officers if we are going to . . . if we have the ability to undermine them?

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of order, Madam President.

The President: Yes, Senator Fubler.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: My colleague is perhaps unintentionally misleading the House. The amendment to the Bill does not remove the technical implementation authority of the Regulatory Authority. It only provides the Minister with the ability to set policy direction.

Sen. David Rogers: Right.

The President: Thank you, Senator.

Sen. David Rogers: It could be interpreted a number of ways I believe.

So, what's the point of having the technical consideration when we have the ability to undercut them? Right? That is one of the reasons why I cite mistrust. We have seen an example of that today. For example, we are just . . . the RA's annual report is only now being tabled from 2020. Yes, from 2020. The Government has taken a "reporting as optional" approach in many of its ministries. I can cite in Health, we have . . . the hospital is at least three years behind on their annual reporting. We have the, I would say . . . what to call it, the Premier has promised a report on individuals who work, consultants who work with the Government.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order, Madam President.

The President: Senator Simmons. What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: That has nothing to do with the Bill that I'm talking about today.

Sen. David Rogers: Senator Simmons, I don't believe that's the point of order, but I will take the . . .

The President: Yes, you need to address the Act.

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, but I am pointing to the reason why I have a distrust.

With its "optional reporting" approach, I believe the quote was *the Premier has tasked the Government to work for the people, not to produce historical reports*. And that was said in the House in the last session. So, I cannot believe that the Senators, especially the Attorney General, as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer, would be okay with a Government that makes laws and is not bound by the law. Right? This sets a dangerous precedent allowing a well-intentioned Minister, who thinks they are doing the right thing, to undercut their technical officers.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order—

Sen. David Rogers: The negative resolution—

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President—

The President: Senator Simmons, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: The Regulatory Authority and its reporting process is based on the Auditor General. The Minister is not part or connected to the piece in which the Auditor General and its hard-working staff complete their audit. That has nothing to do with the Minister.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you for your point of clarification.

Sen. David Rogers: I believe the Minister would acknowledge that the Minister I believe, the (sorry) Senator would acknowledge that the Minister has the ability to change the direction of what the technical officers have stated. Right? So, that makes my argument complete. So, for my question—

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order, Madam President. He is misleading the [Senate].

Sen. David Rogers: That is not misleading the Senate.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: It is, Madam President.

The President: Senator—

Sen. David Rogers: This is becoming just points of interruption.

The President: No, Senator Rogers, will you move on? You said you had an additional—

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, yes, yes, my question.

The President: That does not . . .

Sen. David Rogers: Thank you so much, Madam President. I appreciate that.

The President: The issue has been addressed.

Sen. David Rogers: So, I would like the . . . I would like the Senator to provide a situation where the Minister . . . Can she provide me with a hypothetical in how the Minister would use their power? For example, when

would it trigger? How would the process of using those powers be?

And then, for my next question, there will be costs associated with (how to say?) circumventing the IRP process. Right? What do those costs look like? How will the Government make the facilities whole? How will they calculate the costs associated with undermining one of these processes?

Thank you.

The President: Senator Mischa Fubler, first of all, you indicated you want to speak on this Bill. You have the floor.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

And while this is not one of the several hats that I wear as Junior Minister, I felt compelled to add my contribution in support of the Bill.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Just to . . . in the interest of declaring my own interest, I spent half a decade working for Ascendant Group Limited and then Liberty utilities, the parent company of the monopoly transmission distribution and retail entity who is being affected by this proposed amendment.

In part, I wanted to declare that given in the public domain we saw in the daily today, the President of Liberty utilities spoke out in opposition alongside my colleagues regarding the proposed amendment.

And I guess, in general, I usually take pause or at least apply a little more scrutiny, and I encourage the public to do the same, when someone who is regulated is speaking out in opposition to changes in the regulation that affects them, especially when the stated aim of the change is to enhance affordability of electricity and essential service that many in the public, those my colleagues say they've canvassed recently as well, I'm sure they also speak to the challenges with paying their BELCO bills. In fact, I think some of my colleagues mentioned that.

And so just to reiterate Senator Simmons' briefing there, the Bill does two things. It makes consumer affordability a legal duty instead of an aspiration within the IRP, and also it is giving a time-limited consultative and reviewable mechanism to realign the energy plan with the policy Bermudians elected the Government to deliver. Both are formal features of modern energy governance.

And Senator Simmons has already handily described why this change is needed, but as is my normal kind of style in these types of debates, I wanted to look at what some of our peers in other jurisdictions are doing in this space. It's been quite up to everyone so far from the Opposition and the Independents have spoken in strong . . . I am sorry, apologies I can't recall exactly Senator Tannock's position on it, but the Opposi-

tion started with they are opposed. And so, without having claims of misleading the [Senate], here we go.

The kind of ruling nation, right, where we are an overseas territory of the United Kingdom, the United Kingdom's Energy Act 2013, Strategy and Policy Statement, allows the government to set strategic priorities of the independent Regulator. The system operator must have regard to them and carry out functions best calculated to further the government's policy outcomes. It's been enforced since 1 May 2024.

Moving a little bit closer to home, but still another member of the Commonwealth, we have Canada and in Ontario the Electricity Act 1998, more specifically section 25.32 gives the Minister of Energy a standing statutory power to direct the independent electricity system operator on procurement (which is the purchasing of the generation equipment, which is part of how we determine the energy mix is what we've been talking about today in this Bill's amendment) and the . . . Ontario also publishes a top-down integrated energy plan and it's led by the Minister.

Another jurisdiction that is leaning quite heavily into renewables, California has a [Senate] Bill 350, a public utility code. The legislature there sets binding targets and the regulator runs the IRP to meet state policy goals via the loading order.

Sen. David Rogers: Point of information. Quick—

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Just to . . .

Sen. David Rogers: I just have—

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Sure. I am feeling charitable. Let's have it.

The President: Yes, all right. He's—

[Laughter]

Sen. David Rogers: No, I just have a question. Does what you just—

[Inaudible interjections]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of clarification with the—

Sen. David Rogers: A point of clarification.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Sure.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Sen. David Rogers: Does that . . . are you saying these are not in our current legislation now? Are you saying this is [what] will be added via this Bill? I'm just trying to get the point of why you are citing . . .

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Madam President, if I'm given the liberty of completing my submission, I would expand on the point I am trying to make by pointing at parallels where the executive level of government has direct involvement in setting the strategy and having control over the regulators' approach to planning energy for various jurisdictions.

And taking it a little bit closer to home, maybe even a more comparable Island being Cayman, the government, via the Ministry and Energy Policy Council, sets their National Energy Policy, their most recent one is 2024/25. And again, the government has direct involvement in setting that strategy and . . . some of the points being raised, this whole thing about *it is subverting the Regulator*.

The RA keeps its technical independent role in running and approving the IRP. The Bill governs when the process can be realigned to elected policy. Just [as a] hypothetical, as my colleague was looking for, in theory, if the OBA were the government and they ran on a campaign pledging to bring down the price of electricity, if the legislation that controls that process did not allow them to do that, how would that be democratic?

I question the technocracy of a Regulator. First, it is not jeopardised by this change; but also it is less democratic by having the person who is elected to government to represent the people being unable to apply specific direction in this specific process. Let's also keep in mind that this is not a wholesale change to the relationship between the RA and the Ministry.

In closing, given those kinds of examples that I highlighted briefly there to my colleagues across the floor, accept that the UK, Ontario, Cayman and Jamaica (who I didn't give details of, but they also have this relationship between the Ministry setting direction for the IRP that their Regulator then implements) . . . Do we say that we accept that those other elected officials, those governments, have similar direction? And if so, what specifically makes Bermuda's more narrow? We are specific to only the IRP process and adding time bounding to the suspension and reconstitution timeline, what exactly in there is objectionable?

And also, I do submit . . . that . . . I submit this argument that the Government policy direction of the IRP is the safeguard. We are much more accountable to the people of Bermuda, maybe slightly less so here in the Senate as we are all appointed, but definitely so in Cabinet. And the Government of the day answers to the people of Bermuda, whereas the Regulatory Authority are hired employees.

Also, I mentioned in my kind of register of interest in this debate, I also wanted to highlight that relationship . . . one of the themes that has been running through the utilities' communications with the public is this strong desire for liquid natural gas, LNG (as it were) in the generation mix. And I encourage the public to do their own research in that regard. Algonquin Power & Utilities Corp. AQN (as they trade on the New York Stock Exchange) has a considerable interest in LNG

and I question kind of the influence that has on the regulated entities' submission that kind of kicks off the whole IRP process, bringing this back to the beginning. Like having the person who's regulated say, *Hey, okay, here's what's going to be the plan. Regulator, what do you think?* Maybe that process itself should be re-examined as well.

And on that note, Madam President, I do yield. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Mischa Fubler.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator Rogers, you have an additional comment?

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, so understanding what was communicated—

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of clarification.

The President: Yes, Senator Fubler.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Sorry, Madam President. My understanding of the general debate of Bills is that each person is able to contribute a single time when not in Committee.

The President: Yes.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Right?

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, that's . . .

The President: Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Minister Wilkerson, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to colleagues for their questions.

I will start by addressing, I think, the two comments that were specifically directed to me. One related to litigation risk—

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: —and the other related to, generally, whether the Attorney General was in approval of . . . if I . . . I believe, if I understood Senator Rogers correctly, whether I was in approval of this piece of legislation.

I will start with the second question, Madam President, if I might.

Just for the members of the public, and also for the Senators' edification, before a Bill is tabled, there are very many rounds of consideration within the Attor-

ney General's Chambers. So apart from the robust discussions that will take place at the Cabinet table in the drafting phases. So, to answer that question, yes, I have sat with our drafting team, with our civil advisory team on the fitness of this piece of legislation. So, it is no issue. It's tabled because I support it, Madam President. So that's taking care of that.

In relation to the specific question around has litigation risk been examined from a suspension order. I heard this debate in another place as well. If we were the kind of Government that did not do the right thing for the people because we were concerned that an interested party who is benefiting might use the benefit of the court system to sue the Government, we would not be able to make changes for the benefit of the people.

And there's a general question around about *What constitutes a public interest?* Right? So, these actions are in the public interest. We cannot, Madam President, where I hear the OBA Senate Leader saying that the OBA is in support of affordability measures but just not this one. Right? We cannot have it both ways. Right? Because when I open my electricity bill, I am interested in a solution. And I believe many of the people who are in the listening audience right now are interested in that as well.

So that is to say, there has to always be a balance to be had. And so, I want to just take a little bit of time to walk through some of the current law and what's in the proposed legislation. Because there was also a comment that the Minister currently has considerable powers. If the Minister already had considerable powers, we would not be here debating this piece of legislation this afternoon, Madam President.

The reason that we are here debating it is because the Minister's powers in this regard are indeed limited. And I want to make sure . . . I am going to reemphasise a point that Senator Simmons made that the powers sought in this piece of legislation are limited just to the IRP.

So, the idea that there is a potential for ministerial overreach in all other kinds of areas is unfounded. This piece of legislation has been very, very carefully granted to ensure . . . carefully drafted to ensure that the grant to the Minister is limited to her intervention in relation to the IRP.

Now, there was a question around, really, are we unhappy with the RA's remit because they have the power to do all of these things. Well, clearly, it's already been stated that the RA could use more teeth. But the fact is, based on the powers that it does have with its current legislation, their abilities are not matching the action. Right? And so, this is not a slight on the RA, very capable people, and they do a great job. But there are some legislative stops in how the process is structured. And this is what we are seeking to cure in this go around.

So, Madam President, if you will permit me, I will just take a little bit of time to walk through what the

current law is and what is proposed so that we can match it up adequately. And I believe that was an ask.

So currently, there is no power to pause or even realign the plan once the licensee, BELCO, has submitted it and it sits with the Authority for approval. We do know that some of the proposed items, for example . . . my colleague has given me a really handy chart. We know that Members in this Chamber and average Bermudians are very interested in Bermuda going toward a greener economy, right? That our efforts toward renewable energy is something that no one disagrees about. And the questions are how are we going to get there, right?

So, we have a current plan which would have us looking at a goal for renewable electricity by 2035. That we should be 85 per cent toward that goal by 2035. And we have heard . . . I mean, I have done my part. I have got an electric car. Matter of fact, I have a government electric car. I have a personal . . . I have an electric car. I have invested in doing my part. We all do our things.

But even with that, Madam President and members of the listening public, with a target to have renewable energy by 2035, 85 per cent, the question is, Where are we today? We are 9 per cent toward that goal in 2025. Madam President, 2025 measures, we are only 9 per cent along the way to an 85 per cent goal.

And the question becomes, are we really going to get there the way that we are going? And projecting ahead, in order to get there, there would need to be some substantial changes within the context of the current IRP, right? And investments where we argue that those costs will be offloaded to the taxpayer, to the ratepayer, to you and me, to the members of the listening public, all of us who turn on our lights.

So, we have to have the ability to . . . I think there's been a lot of focus on the pause. It's the pause in order to realign. It's not a pause for no reason. The capable Minister is not saying, *I want to have the ability to put my finger in and stop the plan just to stop it.* Her ambition is to stop it for a reason. And we believe that these changes are sound.

I heard a comment that there was some distrust, not necessarily distrust in this Minister, but in a process by which a new Minister could come along and change the tide. And I think this is why this is one of the safest ways to go, to give the Minister this power to pause, to realign the IRP. The goal would be that we have a new one that anticipates and includes modern technologies that will help us to get to the goals we all agree that we would like to have in terms of renewable energy and a greener Bermuda.

On top of that, Madam President, the key thing is that affordability as a mandate is difficult to accomplish in the current context. And so sometimes, again about the litigation risk, the fact that somebody might sue you is never a good reason not to do the right thing. That is never a good reason not to do the thing that will

be in the public interest. And that is what this Government is attempting to do by moving this along, Madam President.

Just on the plan itself. The current IRP has been in development since 2019. We are now in 2026, and it is effectively not operational. So, we have run far past . . . that without a truly approved plan. I have already talked about the fact that renewable energy penetration is still very low. We know that technology is moving faster than the speed of light.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: I would believe that Bermudians would want to know that we have the ability to bring the licensee in collaboration to help to build a plan that encompasses the best and forward-looking technology as we think about what our overriding resource plan should be for the future.

And under the current regime, no innovative type of licence has been granted. So, the law carries a power to licence a testing of new energy technology since 2023, but no innovative licensee has been awarded. So, we have an instrument that could do it, but it remains underutilised.

There has been, in another place, and a suggestion here today, the idea of the override of interference. I want to just address that specifically.

What is contemplated in this piece of legislation in front of us this afternoon, Madam President, is that the new power, I have already said, that is limited, the Minister, only to the IRP, but that power permits her to give directions only as necessary to give effect to a public interest order.

It is required, I mentioned a little while ago, to be consultative. So, the Minister must, not may, not if she feels like it, she *must* consult—this Minister or any other Minister must consult—the Authority (that's the Regulatory Authority) and the TD&R licensee (BELCO) before acting. And it is reviewable.

So, the TD&R licensee or any aggrieved person may appeal to the Supreme Court. And that's not necessarily suing the government. And typically, with the plans, in full disclosure, Madam President, I previously sat on the board of a telecommunications company. And market reviews and challenges to the court are a matter of course, all right? But general directions, only general directions, you know, are preserved for ordinary ministerial direction.

So that is to say, Madam President, and members of the listening public, it is not interference. It is a very limited power to right a plan that is not accomplishing so far what needs to be accomplished for the people of Bermuda or for the licensee or the RA. And this is what this seeks to do at this time, Madam President.

So, I will pause with my comments there, thank you.

The President: Thank you, Madam Attorney General, Minister of Justice for your overview and comments.

Senator Lindsay Simmons, you have the floor

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I thank Honourable Senators for their contribution and for the questions raised in this debate. I will respond to those concerns directly, and I will be clear about what these amendments do and what they do not do.

Madam President, every household and business in Bermuda depends on reliable and affordable electricity. Decisions about our energy future affect the monthly bills paid by families, the operating costs faced by businesses, and the overall competitiveness of our economy.

These amendments do not weaken the independent role of the Regulatory Authority. The Integrated Resource Plan remains in place, and technical and engineering decisions remain with those who have the expertise to make them.

What has changed is the recognition that decisions about Bermuda's energy future do not exist in a vacuum. And as Senator Tannock notes, the IRP should lead the way for our energy future. How can it lead based on a 2015 policy? That would be walking backwards. The world has changed. They have real consequences for the people who pay bills. I invite my Senate colleagues to better understand our energy landscape and the risks that currently exist within.

When decisions affect every electricity customer, it is responsible and necessary that the elected government ensures that the broader public interest is considered. The people of Bermuda elect a government to safeguard their interests, particularly when critical services are involved.

Madam President, these amendments ensure that Bermuda's energy future is shaped not only by technical consideration, but also by an understanding of affordability, reliability, and national impact. At the same time, the legislation actually strengthens the long-term planning framework for the electricity sector.

It places the IRP firmly in the public domain. It reinforces the independence of the Regulator. It opens the process to a wider community, including businesses, households, and the sections that depend on reliable power. For too long, the structure of the sector has allowed one entity to play multiple roles in shaping and benefiting the plan. When the body that helps define the plan also brings forward projects for approval, the plan risks losing its purpose as a guiding framework. These reforms address the imbalance. They restore transparency and accountability.

Bermuda already set an ambitious goal in 2019 to reach approximately 85 per cent renewable energy by 2035. Progress has not matched that ambition. And projections indicate continued reliance on fossil fuels in the years ahead. The transition that was promised has not yet been fully realised. International examples show that change is possible.

Jurisdictions with similar constraints, such as isolated grids and high energy costs, have expanded renewable energy, increased competition, and delivered savings to consumers.

Bermuda's path must be tailored to our own realities, but these examples demonstrate what can be achieved with the right framework. Some would describe these changes as interference. In reality, they introduce transparency where it has been lacking, and they ensure that decision-making reflects the interests of the public. The amendments are deliberately narrow. They apply only in defined circumstances in the public interest. They do not give Ministers open-ended control, and they do not undermine the Regulatory independence. An energy system must serve everyone who depends on it, and everyone depends on it.

Reliability is essential. Affordable electricity is essential. A successful transition to cleaner energy is essential. Every stakeholder from household and small businesses to major industries and community organisations has a role in shaping Bermuda's energy future.

One Island, one energy system built for everyone. The plan now belongs to the people of Bermuda. Together we have the opportunity to build an energy future that protects affordability, strengthens reliability, and delivers the transition that our country has long been promised.

Madam President, I also want to make it clear that the technical officers under the RA are not under the Minister of Home Affairs' remit.

And now I would answer your questions.

Will the Minister intend to suspend the IRP process and what public interest has been assessed? The electricity sector policy is out of alignment with the policy directive of today. The IRP is referencing and using an outdated 2015 electricity policy to set future generations. This needs to be addressed. The Government recently finished its consultation on the National Electricity Sector Policy 2026 on 21 May 2026 and are in the process of finalising the policy.

The Attorney General pretty much answered this question. Has the Attorney General or independent council been consulted? Yes, the Attorney General's Chamber and independent council have been consulted. Stakeholders stated there was no legal objection to the amendment. The RA is done with the public interest in mind.

Number three, the RA is not sufficiently working in the interest of the public. The RA is an independent Regulatory; however, they are still accountable to the people and to the Government of the day. To follow the policy's direction, therefore, policy and legislation are being provided to address this. Instead of issuing ministerial direction, which will be perceived as ministerial interference.

Number four, how does the Minister see using these powers? In the current situation, there is a disconnect between the policy and the IRP. It is required to pause the IRP to ensure the policy is updated and,

in turn, ensure the IRP takes this update policy into consideration.

And I have answered all the questions, Madam President.

The President: Then it is just left for you to move your Bill, Senator Simmons.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.
Madam President,—

Sen. Tawanna Tannock: Excuse me, Madam President. Can you remind me of the protocol? Do we get a chance to have a follow-up question from Senator Simmons's responses?

The President: No.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Okay, thank you.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled Electricity Amendment Act 2026 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to the second reading?

No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Electricity Amendment Act 2026 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

[No audible response]

The President: We have three objections. So, we will take a vote.

[Crosstalk]

The President: When there are three objections we have to take a vote.

[Pause]

The President: Senators, for your information, on the third reading if we have three objections then we do have to take a vote.

[Pause]

The Deputy Clerk: Senators, it has been moved for the third reading of the Electricity Amendment Act 2026. If you are in agreement with the motion, say Aye. If you are against, say Nay.

Senator Cunningham.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Can you repeat the motion again?

The Deputy Clerk: Senator Simmons moved for the third reading. So, if you are in agreement with the motion, say Aye. If you are against the third reading, say Nay.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

[Crosstalk]

DIVISION

[Third reading of the Electricity Amendment Act 2026]

Ayes: 6

Sen. Lauren Bell
Sen. the Hon. C. Caesar
Sen. Mischa Fubler
Sen. Lindsay Simmons
Sen. Tawana Tannock
Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson

Nays: 4

Sen. Victoria Cunningham
Sen. David Rogers
Sen. Tarik Smith
Sen. the Hon. J. Dillas-Wright

Absent:

Sen. John Wight

The Deputy Clerk: With a vote of six Ayes to four Nays, the motion carries.

[Motion passed by majority on division: The Electricity Amendment Act 2026 was given a third reading.]

The President: So, Senators, that is the third reading.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill . . . I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill do now pass.

Are there any objections?

[No audible response]

[Crosstalk]

The President: We have three again. We took a vote on the motion and now we are taking a vote on the passage of the Bill.

[Pause]

The President: This vote is going to be on the passage, the actual passage of the Bill.

The Deputy Clerk: It has been moved that the Electricity Amendment Act 2026 do now pass. If you are in agreement with the passage of the Bill, say Aye. If you are against, say Nay.

DIVISION

[Passage of the Electricity Amendment Act 2026]

Ayes: 6

Sen. Lauren Bell
Sen. the Hon. C. Caesar
Sen. Mischa Fubler
Sen. Lindsay Simmons
Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson
Sen. the Hon. Joan Dillas-Wright

Nays: 4

Sen. Victoria Cunningham
Sen. David Rogers
Sen. Tarik Smith
Sen. Tawana Tannock

Absent:

Sen. John Wight

The Deputy Clerk: With a vote of six Ayes to four Nays, the Bill is passed.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President

The President: Thank you, Senators. The Bill is passed

[Motion passed by majority on division: The Electricity Amendment Act 2026 was passed.]

The President: We will now move on with our Orders of the Day and that is . . . the next item . . . oh sorry, because of the time I think we need to break for lunch.

[Crosstalk]

The President: The vote was six . . . they didn't hear the vote.

[Crosstalk]

The Deputy Clerk: Madam President voted Nay.

The President: No, no, no, I didn't vote Nay. I voted [Aye]. Yes, for the passage of the Bill.

[Crosstalk]

The President: She's looking at the wrong one.

The Deputy Clerk: I had the wrong paper, sorry. Madam President voted for the passage of the Bill, so it was six—

The President: It was six to four. I voted for the passage of the Bill.

Senators, it is now 12:45. I am recommending that we break for lunch and we will return at 2:15.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President—

The President: Sorry—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Sorry, Madam President. I would like to propose a motion that we continue through because I believe we are at the end of business.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: It's a motion.

The President: Senators, the motion is that we continue and not break for lunch. The Senators are in agreement—

[Crosstalk]

The President: Sorry, Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawanna Tannock: So just for clarity, are we . . . so that would be [Items] 4 and 5—

The President: The Bill is passed.

Sen. Tawanna Tannock: No, no, no, no. So that would be—

[Laughter]

Sen. Tawanna Tannock: Thank you—

The President: Lunch . . . you are talking about lunch?

[Laughter]

The President: I am sorry.

Sen. Tawanna Tannock: I would like to be talking about lunch, but I am talking about Tourism Investment, Agreed Purchase of Compass Point, and then . . . so we are still going to go through those now?

The President: Yes, we are going to continue with our Orders of the—

Sen. Tawanna Tannock: Okay, all right. Okay, okay. Well, okay. Senator Fubler, can you be brief?

[Pause]

The President: Senators . . .

[Pause]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I move that . . . a motion to suspend [Standing Order] 35—

The President: Senators, this . . . what has happened is that . . . let me just read out the procedure on the third reading, because it doesn't happen often and when it does it creates an issue for us. I just want to read the procedure on the third reading:

“A Bill having passed through the Committee of the whole Senate, or by leave of the Senate, having been read a second time without referral to the Committee of the whole Senate, may forthwith be read a third time and passed unless at least three members object to the motion for the third reading, in which case the third reading shall be deferred to the next day of meeting.”¹

However, as Senator Lindsay Simmons has noted there can be an objection to . . . for the . . .

[Crosstalk]

The President: Yes, to suspend. So, this is an issue that always—

POINT OF INFORMATION

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: I just want a point of information that three [Senators] objected. It should have happened, and now you are calling for suspension. The process would have been that we should have followed this, and we did an Act in March—

POINT OF INFORMATION

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes, but point of order or point of information, Madam President.

You are correct in the ruling, and I have the right to put a motion on the floor to suspend [Standing Order] 35. Regardless of where we are now, I still have the right to put the motion on the floor.

The President: Yes, that is correct.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Because I would have been able to do it when you all objected.

¹ [Standing Order 35](#)

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: But it is my understanding that it is in the notes that three [Senators] objected to the third reading already.

POINT OF INFORMATION

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes, and she read on to say, *however*. And even before she said *however*, I put a motion on the floor to suspend [Standing Order] 35 which is in the [Standing Orders]. So, I put a motion to—

The President: Suspend [Standing Order] 35. And once the suspension of [Standing Order] 35 occurs, then we can proceed.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Is it more than three? Or three or more?

The Deputy Clerk: Three or more.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Well, I mean—

Sen. David Rogers: What is the timeframe to suspend?

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: point of order, Madam President. You have made a ruling. A mistake happened. Regardless, we would have made the . . . we would have suspended it then. You have . . . you went forward. The motion with the Bill passed, now we are going backwards. So, I still have the right to—

Sen. David Rogers: I understand your statement. But can we get some clarification from the [President]? I have asked a question. I would like her to answer that first, please. Thank you so much.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order, Madam President. You have ruled on it twice.

[Pause]

[Crosstalk]

The Deputy Clerk: It has been moved to suspend Standing Order 35 in relation to the Electricity Amendment Act 2026. If you are in support of the suspension of Standing Order 35, say Aye. If you are against, say Nay.

DIVISION

[Suspension of Standing Order 35]

Ayes: 6

Sen. Lauren Bell
Sen. the Hon. C. Caesar
Sen. Mischa Fubler
Sen. Lindsay Simmons
Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson
Sen. the Hon. Joan Dillas-Wright

Nays: 3

Sen. Victoria Cunningham
Sen. David Rogers
Sen. Tawana Tannock

Absent:

Sen. Tarik Smith
Sen. John Wight

The Deputy Clerk: With a vote of six Ayes to three Nays, the motion to suspend [Standing Order] 35 is carried.

[Motion passed by majority on division: Standing Order 35 suspended.]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, do I read the third reading again?

The President: Yes—

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: I mean the passage of the Bill.

The President: Passage of the Bill.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Electricity Act 2026 *[sic]* do now pass.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection. The Bill is passed.
Thank you, Senators.

[Motion carried: The Electricity [Amendment] Act 2026 was read a third time and passed.]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: We are going to move on with the agenda.

[Crosstalk]

The President: We are going to—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President, I did put a motion on the floor that we—

The President: Carry on.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: —carry on. But now that we have had this delay, I believe Members are having a competition with their bellies right now.

[Laughter]

The President: So, we will break for lunch—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you.

The President: —and we will resume at 2:15.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, just for clarity, because Senator Tannock said that I didn't say it correctly. I said the *Electricity Amendment Act 2026* do now pass . . . just for clarity.

The President: Thank you.

Proceedings suspended at 12:56 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:15 pm

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

The President: Good afternoon, Senators, and to the listening audience.

The Senate is resuming again for the afternoon session. We will continue with our Orders of the Day, and that is Item No. 4, which is consideration of the Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2026, and that is in the name of Senator Mischa J. Fubler, the Junior Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.

Senator Fubler, you have the floor.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 71(2)

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the provisions of Standing Order 71(2) be suspended.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 71(2) suspended.]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Senate do now take under consideration the Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2026, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Tourism under section 3 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017, together with the written agreement of the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

Carry on, Senator Fubler.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

DRAFT ORDER

TOURISM INVESTMENT (ROSEWOOD BERMUDA) ORDER 2026

Sen. Mischa Fubler: The purpose in bringing this [Tourism Investment \(Rosewood Bermuda\) Order 2026](#) before this Chamber is to enable the grant of tax relief to the developers investing in the tourism product Rosewood Bermuda, TP Holdco Ltd., which is in the national economic interest of Bermuda. Madam President, I am pleased to invite this Chamber to take this Order under consideration.

Madam President, a key element of success in business is investment in the product to ensure it is always fresh and serves to meet the demands of the customers that businesses aim to serve. Madam President, the hospitality business is no different. Destinations, hotels, and attractions that seek to trade only on reputation can often lose their edge, proving to be more of what they were than what they need to be. Success in this aggressive and competitive tourism marketplace demands that every affiliated tourism business consistently stays at the cutting edge.

Madam President, the Order before this Chamber represents that kind of investment in a product proposed to be made by a key tourism site in Bermuda. Rosewood Bermuda is an iconic property located in the East End of the Island. The current owners have taken the foundation laid by their predecessors and have determined to grow the status of the hotel to meet the true luxury standard benefiting its location.

Madam President, the Rosewood Bermuda property is a mixed-use development inclusive of the Rosewood Bermuda hotel, a beach club, an 18-hole golf course and club, tennis facilities, and a marina. The hotel comprises of 88 guest rooms and suites, as well as five food and beverage outlets, banquet facilities, a spa, and other fitness facilities. In addition, there are several fractional and whole ownership residential developments, which are located in the Tucker's Point master-planned estate, which are neither owned nor part of the hotel.

Madam President, in 2018, TP Holdco Ltd. invested \$25 million in the phase 1 renovations, completely repositioning the guest rooms, common areas, dining outlets, beach club, and clubhouse. Madam President, the Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2020 refers to the 2018 investment made by TP Holdco Ltd. Madam President, phase 2 is the \$82,840,000 capital investment to which this Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2026 refers to, and includes additional hotel improvements, such as

new pickleball and padel courts, new food and beverage venues, and enhancements to existing hotel amenities. The construction of eight new Rosewood-branded residences, and the replacement and upgrading of equipment, furniture, and fixtures.

Madam President, TP Holdco Ltd. is aware that the Tourism Investment Act 2017 was amended in 2025 to provide the Minister responsible for Tourism, with the approval of the Minister of Finance, the authority to revoke an existing Tourism Investment Order prior to its expiry. In accordance with this amendment, TP Holdco Ltd. submitted a request to the Minister responsible for Tourism to

1. revoke the Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2020, which expires in January of 2028, save for the relief from customs duty, which expired on the 2nd of June 2026; and
2. that the Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2026 be issued simultaneously.

Madam President, this request was made such that Rosewood Bermuda hotels experiences no gap in relief, that is, between the revocation of the 2020 Order and the issue of the 2026 Order.

Madam President, this Chamber will note that the terms of this 2026 Order are consistent with the Tourism Investment Act 2017 and provide the relief sought for a period of 15 years. That relief is set out in clause 3 of the Order, and again, is consistent with the principal Act.

Madam President, I draw the attention of this Chamber to clause 4 of the Order, which sets out the terms and conditions by which the hotel qualifies for, namely,

1. the exemption from the employer's share of payroll tax; and
2. the exemption from land tax.

Respectively, a management training programme for Bermudians is in operation at the hotel, [with] 70 per cent of the workforce being Bermudian for the relevant land tax exemption period. I hereby advise the Chamber that for 2024 and 2025, Madam President, 90 per cent of the persons employed by Rosewood Bermuda were Bermudian, and that the same is projected for the years 2026 through 2029.

Madam President, TP Holdco Ltd., is committed to investing in Bermuda as a long-term partner. As such, I am pleased to commend this Order for the support of this Honourable [Senate].

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Fubler, Junior Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.

Would any Senator care to speak on this?

Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Junior Minister for bringing this Order to the Senate. We are in support. Ultimately,

the development of the Rosewood property represents significant investment into our tourism product.

I do have a few questions. One is, you are obviously talking about revoking and reinstating. I cannot remember exactly the words you used, but can the Junior Minister confirm whether there is any restriction in the Tourism Investment Act preventing a future applicant from revoking an order and then reapplying again mid-term and whether the Government has considered any safeguards in this area to be necessary?

And furthermore, on the eight branded residences, which are obviously the new properties (I believe Rosewood Shoreline Collection residences are one through eight), it is saying that they will need to be in the hotel inventory for at least six months of the year. Is there any . . . I guess if that threshold is not met, is that relief clawed back for each unit, or does the breach affect the entire Order? So, is it just on per unit or across all of them for the land tax, or customs as well?

And then I just wanted to say that I think it is amazing that 90 per cent of their staff are Bermudian. I think that is a testament to the work being done across Bermuda to try and engage with Bermudians getting into the industry, potentially with them. I would be interested to know. This is not a question about how many are on a management training scheme kind of to go up, or to elevate up the ranks, but I think it is definitely a positive, especially given another hotel development coming. But I think, yes, this is encouraging, and we look forward to seeing the development progress.

Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Tannock, you have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you. I have been very vocal about these Orders and the need to assess the economic impact and the cost benefit analysis of extending them versus having them pay something in tax.

And I have to congratulate Senator Fubler, because one of the things that I was most concerned about was the fact that there were matrices that were supposed to be met by establishments that had Special Development Orders and that there was . . . it appeared to be a lack of data around whether or not they were meeting them. So, to hear those employment numbers of Bermudians is great. To hear those numbers eventually about management, that would also be fantastic. So, thank you for getting that information, Senator Fubler.

My question is regarding the payroll tax, and maybe it is first in my mind because we were talking about payroll tax this morning. Do we know or is there any way to see how that relief is actually passed on via salary? So, do we know if that . . . How is that relief passed on to those employed by Rosewood?

And also, did I understand correctly? The employees still have to pay their portion, but Rosewood does not have to pay the employer portion. And can you clarify why that decision was made?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill, Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2026?

Hearing none, then we will wait to hear from Senator Fubler.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President, and also to my colleagues for your submitted questions.

First off, [regarding] the restrictions on revoking and/or issuing a subsequent TIA [Tourism Investment Act] for Senator Cunningham, I will, of course, start by referring back to my brief wherein it is included in the Tourism Investment Act. And we will also call your memory back to possibly 2025 or maybe 2024. I am trying to confirm now when it was exactly that we passed this amendment. I think the majority of us were actually in the Chamber when we did. And so, to your question, yes, we are allowed to revoke one and then issue a new Tourism Investment Order.

And are there any safeguards required? I would invite possibly . . . I do not know if the format allows for this, Madam President, but I would invite a supplementary to provide some more context. I would say the legislative process and also the regular reviews that the tourism policy officer . . . Apologies. I always forget the full name of the department. But there is a group of people who are tasked with monitoring this both in tourism and labour around the kind of requirements for being eligible for the tax relief.

Okay, and then your second question was around the kind of ancillary units on the property. And each unit will be issued an assessment number. And if a unit fails to be a part of the hotel inventory for the relevant period, they fail to meet the criteria and will not have access to the tax relief.

And then moving on to Senator Tannock's questions, I am still awaiting the input from my colleagues and the technical officers. And while we are on that, just kind of philosophically around the question, I cannot speak to the decision for why it was only the employers portion of the payroll tax being exempted, but I would offer the argument that employees still benefit from the operation of Government and are not providing the jobs that are part of the incentive for issuing these tax reliefs to encourage improvements in the tourism product. But I will await confirmation on both of your questions there, if you will indulge me, Madam President. The technical officers do have that delay that my colleague mentioned earlier this morning.

The President: No problem; we will await [it].

Oh, I beg your pardon. Senator Cunningham, you have additional—

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Well, I just wanted to ask somewhat of a supplementary, but just to make sure I have understood your answer correctly about the revoking the Order and reapplying again. So, I assume then what you are saying is that Government will have ensured the compliance to that point for any of the Bermudians employed and management training before they will even consider revoking another Order and re-initiating it.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Right. So, as I mentioned, there are annual reviews of compliance for being eligible. And then also, if you can recall or draw your attention back to the Bill itself, many of those benefits are deferred for several years before they are eligible for the exemptions.

The President: Senator Cunningham. Sorry, Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Thank you, Madam President.

I do have a supplementary to Senator Cunningham's with regard to requirements for getting the extension. And this is with regard to the requirement I often talk about and I spoke about earlier.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of clarification.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, yes.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Sen. Mischa Fubler: And so, it is not an extension. We are reissuing.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Okay.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: So, we are annulling one and then issuing a new one, as opposed to taking the original and extending the timeline. Without revisiting debate, Madam President, I think we did discuss this in depth around the kind of semantics of, *Is it being extended or reissued?*

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes. Thank you, Senator Fubler. My apologies.

I did . . . and this is just really a point of clarity in the drafting of the actual [Order]. It is not a substantive issue point. Right? But under terms and conditions, for [clause 4](2), it says, "To qualify for the exemption from the employer's share of the payroll tax under paragraph 3(1)(c), the Minister responsible for workforce development shall, for the relevant period, confirm in writing to the Minister, annually, that a management training programme for Bermudians is in operation at the hotel."

And I do not have the principal Act in front of me, but it does not clarify and state that it is a Minister of . . . Which Minister is it? Is it the Minister because—

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of information.

The President: Yes.

POINT OF INFORMATION

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Currently, Workforce Development falls under the Ministry of Economy and Labour.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Okay. So, because . . . When we look at the preamble, it says, “The Minister responsible for tourism, with the written agreement of the Minister of Finance, . . .” So, when we talk about the Minister of Workforce Development writing to the Minister, which Minister are they writing to? Yes, that was . . . That is . . . That was my question.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Madam President, while I await the response to those from the technical officers to the question, Is there any way to see whether the employer's portion of the payroll tax is passed on to the employer? I do not know—

[Inaudible interjection]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: They have been a benefit. Well, I think the argument is the benefit, Is the employer being able to invest more into the enhancement of their tourism product? And also, the Office of the Tax Commissioner is the office which provides this confirmation. (No, no. That . . .)

Further to your question around the decision for the employee not receiving the payroll tax benefit, the tax exemption applies to the hotelier, not to the employee, for those reasons I elaborated on earlier.

[I am] still awaiting the confirmation of which Minister, the Minister responsible for Workforce Development is writing to confirm. Ah, . . . I am not going to venture a guess, but I think the person who says it is okay for tax exemption is [the Minister of] Finance. And so, I would assume that, but I will wait for the technical officers to confirm.

[Pause]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you.

I have the response here, Madam President. The Minister responsible for Workforce Development writes to the Minister responsible for Tourism, who then again says to the Minister of Finance, *Can we please have this exemption for this tourism product?*

And I believe that was all of the questions that [were] posed, Madam President.

The President: Mm-hmm. Yes.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: And so—

The President: You can move your—

Sen. Mischa Fubler: I do. I move that the motion be approved.

The President: Is there any objection to the motion?
No objection.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: All right. Madam President, I move that the said draft Order be approved and that the following message be sent to His Excellency the Governor.

“May it please Your Excellency, the Senate, having had under consideration the draft Order entitled the Tourism Investment (Rosewood Bermuda) Order 2026, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Tourism under section 3 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017, together with the written agreement of the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017, has the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Senate has approved the said draft Order.”

The President: Thank you, Senator Fubler, and a suitable message will be sent.

Thank you, all Senators who participated in that debate.

We now move on to our final item, Item No. 5, consideration of the proposed agreement of purchase of the Compass Point Building together with all land appurtenant thereto situate at 9 Bermudiana Road, Pembroke.

And that is also in the name of Senator Mischa Fubler, the Junior Minister of Public Works and Environment.

Senator Fubler, you have the floor.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you once again, Madam President.

MOTION

COMPASS POINT BUILDING APPROVAL TO PURCHASE

Sen. Mischa Fubler: And so again, just to restate:

I move that the Senate do now take under consideration the following motion.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, in accordance with section 2(1)(a) of the Acquisition of Land Act 1970, this Honourable [Senate] approve the purchase of the Compass Point Building together with all land [appurtenant] thereto, situate at 9 Bermudiana Road, Pembroke.

And Madam President . . . Oh wait. No. Sorry. I read on, right? Yes, I am sorry.

Madam President, there are moments in Government when the easiest decision is to do nothing. To continue operating in the same way. To continue paying the same cost year after year, and to accept existing limitations simply because that is how things have always been done. But, Madam President, there are also moments when doing nothing has a cost, an opportunity cost, as it were. And that is the fundamental question before this Chamber today.

This debate is not simply about the acquisition of the Compass Point Building. It is about whether Government is prepared to take a responsible step toward reducing its reliance on private rental accommodation, modernising the government estate, and creating greater financial capacity to invest in the priorities that matter most to Bermudians.

Madam President, today Government spends approximately \$11 million annually on commercial office accommodation. These facilities are necessary for the delivery of public services, and leasing will continue to have an appropriate role within the government estate.

However, this proposal represents a deliberate first step toward reducing that burden. By relocating departments that are currently operating from privately leased facilities into a government-owned building, Government projects a reduction of approximately \$2 million annually in private rental expenditure. That is \$2 million every year that can be redirected over time towards roads, housing, infrastructure, environmental protection, and the services that Bermudians rely upon.

Madam President, before committing to an investment of this magnitude, a responsible government must undertake a thorough analysis of the available options and determine which approach delivers the greatest long-term value for the people of Bermuda.

The Ministry of Public Works and Environment therefore considered several approaches. The first was the construction of a new purpose-built government facility. While a new facility could be designed specifically to meet Government's long-term needs, the reality of Bermuda's current construction environment means that this would represent the most expensive and time-consuming option. Recent industry estimates indicate that new construction can cost between approximately \$700 and \$1,000 per square foot. A comparable 81,000-square-foot facility could therefore require construction costs between \$56 million and \$81 million before considering land acquisition, professional fees, planning approvals, procurement, and other associated costs.

In addition to the significant capital investment required, Government would continue spending approximately \$11 million annually on commercial accommodation during the many years required to design, approve, procure, and construct such a facility.

The second option was to repurpose existing government properties, including former school buildings. However, many of these properties have already

been strategically allocated to important national priorities, including community services, facilities for seniors, food security initiatives, and education reform. Furthermore, converting these facilities into modern office accommodation would itself require substantial capital investment, extensive refurbishment works, and considerable time before they could be brought into service.

The third option was the acquisition of an existing structurally sound and fit-for-purpose building. After considering these options, Government determined that the acquisition of Compass Point represented the most prudent and cost-effective path forward.

The Government negotiated a purchase price of \$14.5 million, which was \$1.5 million below the valuation conducted by the Department of Land Valuation. The acquisition cost equates to approximately \$178 per square foot. And even after accounting for refurbishment, technology upgrades, internal fit-out, and other investments required to create a modern government facility, the total investment remains approximately \$275 per square foot.

Madam President, when compared with the cost and time required to construct a new facility or convert other government properties, it is clear why the acquisition of Compass Point represents the most practical, timely, and financially responsible option available to Government.

Madam President, this acquisition also supports a more coordinated and efficient government. By bringing together departments with closely connected responsibilities in finance, economic development, regulation, and administration, government can improve collaboration, reduce duplication, streamline processes, and create a more seamless experience for the public. For the individual Bermudian or business owner, this means less time navigating multiple government locations, improved coordination between departments, and a government that is better structured to respond to their needs. This is why modernising the government estate is not simply about buildings. It is about creating a public service that is better equipped to serve the people of Bermuda. Madam President, perhaps one of the most important benefits of this acquisition is one that may not be immediately obvious to the public.

For many years, Government has faced a significant challenge in modernising its existing estate. The issue has not simply been identifying buildings that require refurbishment. The issue has been finding suitable accommodation where departments can be temporarily relocated while those works are carried out. The reality is simple: you cannot effectively undertake major refurbishment works while an entire government department remains fully operational within the same building. And the purchase of Compass Point changes that.

It provides the swing space necessary to temporarily decant departments from ageing facilities allowing Government to undertake comprehensive up-

grades in a safer, more efficient, and more cost-effective manner. Once completed, those departments can return to facilities that are better designed for modern technology, accessibility, collaboration, and improved public service.

In that sense, Compass Point is not the end of the government estate strategy. It is the enabling step that allows that strategy to move forward. It unlocks Government's ability to transform ageing facilities, improve the working environment of our public officers, and provides the public with government facilities that are fit for the future.

Madam President, I recognise that some Bermudians will ask whether these resources should instead be directed toward roads, housing, and addressing the cost of living. However, responsible leadership requires us to do more than one thing at once.

We must continue addressing the needs of Bermudians today while also making strategic investments that strengthen Government's ability to address those challenges tomorrow. By reducing private rental expenditure, managing public assets strategically, and improving the efficiency of government operations, we create greater financial flexibility for future investments and the priorities that matter most to our people.

Madam President, no single decision will solve every challenge facing Bermuda. However, it is a practical decision that places Government in a stronger position to address those challenges over the long term.

The easiest decision before this Chamber is to preserve the status quo, to continue paying the same costs, occupying the same buildings, and accepting the same limitations simply because that is how things have always been done. But the responsibility of leadership is not simply to maintain what we inherited. The responsibility of leadership is to make the decisions necessary to build what comes next.

This Government believes that Compass Point represents such a decision. Not because it is the easiest choice, but because it is the responsible one.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Fubler, Junior Minister of Public Works and Environment.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: And Senators, before I open the floor for you to engage in the discussion of this Bill, I would like to acknowledge and welcome Stephen Symonds, the policy analyst.

Welcome to you, sir.

[Compass Point Building Approval to Purchase, debate continuing]

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President. And thank you to the Junior Minister for presenting his presentation.

I think this is, . . . It makes financial sense sometimes, you know, government ownership versus continuing to pay rent indefinitely. But I think it still bears some need for scrutiny. It is obviously going to be, you know, investment in a long-term public asset. And the brief mentioned a reduction in \$2 million per year in rent. Obviously, when you are renting an office building or, you know, space, you are purely just paying the rent. We will now be charged with paying maintenance fees, and I would assume a land tax. So, I was wondering what those costs would be in relation to the Compass Point Building.

And my second question is that the brief mentioned that the Department of Land Valuation had done the valuation of the building. That is all well and good, but was there an independent valuation done just to provide a little more comfort?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Yes, Senator Rogers, David Rogers, you have the floor.

Sen. David Rogers: Good day. I have got two questions.

You mentioned that this is a facility that will allow you to decant ministries from their various homes as they refurbish. Is there an order or a criteria? Is there an expectation or timeline with which you are expecting to do the first decantation? Is there something specifically the Government is looking at or targeting?

And the next question is, how is this acquisition being financed? Is it going to be just complete . . . maybe I missed it in the brief, but is it going to be a complete cash payment? Is it facilitated through a loan? How is . . . is there information on how that loan is structured? Just for our understanding, because there might be discounts associated with cash, right?

The President: Thank you, Senator Rogers.

Senator Tannock, you have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you.

I agree there is a need to reduce the requirement for Government to have to use outside sources for rent. And my questions were very similar to those of my colleagues that were asked, so I will not repeat it in terms of the complete cost (closing, insurance, any other issues). And then also, how is it being financed?

However, I have another issue. And that is, we were presented in this House the glories of the City of Hamilton Plan 2025 and how it was going to change the

City of Hamilton. It was going to pedestrianise it. It was going to reinvigorate the waterfront. This property falls dead smack in the middle of the City of Hamilton Plan. How has that been taken into consideration when Government decided to purchase it to make it administrative buildings?

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of Order.

The President: Senator Fubler.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Senator Tannock is perhaps unintentionally misleading the House. The building, Compass Point, is actually on the western edge of the City of Hamilton as opposed to smack dab in the centre.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: No, I said it is smack dab in the middle of the City Plan area. Not the city itself. But it is . . . if the City Plan area goes from East Broadway all the way back over to Canal Street, and we look at it as a right angle, it would be in the corner of the right angle, which is kind of like the middle if you look at it as half a square.

[Laughter]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Madam President, my objection stands. I feel misled now. I take your point.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: So, my question is, was this taken into the Government's consideration? Because this is the area that we were talking about. It has always been mixed-use, right? But this area we were talking about pedestrianising, and we were talking about it had a high value on footfall because of international business being in it and the access. And we talked about the [Royal Bermuda] Yacht Club, Markel, and all of this. So, my question is, how was the City of Hamilton 2025 Plan considered, and how was this purchase factored into that plan?

Thank you.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Madam President, if those are all of the submissions from my colleagues, I will begin to provide responses as and when they come in from the tax commissioner . . . sorry, not from the tax commissioner. Sorry.

[Laughter]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: I am saying the tax commissioner because that is one of the departments who we are potentially looking to move in there.

But to your question, Senator Tannock, around the City Plan and improving the walkability of the city, as it were, you can look back at the brief where I men-

tioned that we were looking to bring related government services into the same space, reducing the need for . . . well *need* may be strong, but reducing the tendency for people to park immediately outside the building they need to go into, where possible.

And then also, I will highlight that that structure does include some parking spaces, I assume primarily for the employees of the space, but would also support those who are less mobile. But in general, having multiple government departments in the same building as opposed to spread across various buildings in the city will encourage the public to park less frequently in other areas.

Speaking to the City Plan around the question from Senator Cunningham for maintenance fees and land tax costs, the response I have is that there is a maximum of \$1 million per year in operational costs and land tax that . . . should they apply.

The President: Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, Madam President, I do have a supplementary question regarding the parking. And this is just for clarity. So, it is the Compass Point Building purchase, and then there is also the purchase of a parking lot.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: All land thereto, yes.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Okay. And is it affixed to the building, or is it somewhere else?

Sen. Mischa Fubler: It is adjacent to, like, from the aerial shots, it's like west, southwest of the building.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Because my question then becomes, that is the area that we are talking about pedestrianising.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: It is not new parking; it is existing—

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Right, right. No, but I am saying in the City of Hamilton Plan, that is one of the areas we were talking about pedestrianising.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Fair enough. But I think the brief today is about the purchase and whether we should do that or not.

[Laughter]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: And I would encourage all people attending the city to park in either the City of Hamilton or Bull's Head parking lot to walk to their destinations. It is something I attempt to do when I am in the city, as opposed to circling the block until I can park immedi-

ately outside. And as I mentioned, having multiple government departments in the same building helps to facilitate that.

Just as a sample from the strategic analysis that was conducted around the purchasing (speaking to my colleague, Senator Rogers' questions) there are many, some of them from the Department of Finance. Things like the Accountant General's office, the Office of the Tax Commissioner, Registrar of Companies, social insurance, the cashiers, all in one place. Those are places people now find themselves having to venture to different buildings to go and complete their interaction with the government. And having a one-stop shop, as it were, for multiple payment vectors is an efficiency that I think we can all welcome.

Going back to the questions . . . a question around there being an independent valuation being conducted. No, there was not. But I will direct my colleagues to the public sphere, as it were. The building was originally listed at approximately \$19 million, I do not have the exact number, but several million more than the agreed-upon price. I think we can all agree that we are realising value for money here on the purchase price.

And as the priority of the government departments, the building will be deemed the government financial hub and economic development [hub]. Remaining spaces are still to be decided. But there is a process to identify which departments will move to maximise the reduction in rents. So, also something that has been a concern around the . . . that is part of the focus, both the beneficial impact on our customers, the people of Bermuda, as well as realising rent efficiencies.

How is the building being financed? I will encourage my relatively new colleague to tune in to the broadcast on Fridays that precede our sitting, because in another place, the Minister of Finance noted that it would be funded through the supplemental budget. So, a cash purchase.

And I am still awaiting further feedback from the technical officers around the consideration of the City of Hamilton Plan 2025. Yes, it was considered.

And, Madam President, I think on that note, I have responded to all of the questions that were posed.

And that being done, I move that the motion be approved.

The President: Senator Tannock put up her hand just before you—

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Okay, so she's—

The President: No, no. I just wanted to give her an opportunity if she had—

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes. So, my only . . . thank you, Senator Fubler. My only follow-up was going to be, is it possible to see that analysis of this purchase and how it fits into that Plan?

Thank you.

The President: Senator Fubler, you can continue to move your motion

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President. I will be guided by your ruling.

I move that the motion be approved.

The President: It has been moved that the motion be approved.

Is there any objection to it?

No objection.

With that said then thank you, Senator Mischa Fubler, for presenting your Bill as the Junior Minister of Public Works and the Environment.

And that completes our Orders of the day. We now move on.

[Motion carried: The Senate approved the purchase of the Compass Point Building, together with all land appurtenant thereto, situate at 9 Bermudiana Road, Pembroke.]

MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: Would any Senator care to speak?
Senator Tannock, you have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Thank you, Madam President.

It is with great humbleness that I am speaking on behalf of my colleague, Independent Senator John Wight, who wished that he could be here today, but had prior engagements and as such could not be here.

I would like to extend my condolences to the family of Sir John W. Swan. And what I will read now will be condolences on behalf of Mr. Wight.

[Crosstalk]

The President: Sorry.

[Crosstalk]

The President: I beg your pardon?

[Crosstalk]

The President: I have given permission for Senator . . . Senator Wight did . . . he is travelling, he is overseas. And he had given . . . he had asked permission for Senator Tannock to express his condolences for . . . and I gave permission for Senator Tannock to do so.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Madam President, thank you.

The President: Yes, so on congratulatory and obituary speeches, I had given prior permission for her to read something that he had presented.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Thank you.

The President: So, Senator Tannock, you have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Thank you.

Madam President, all of Bermuda was saddened by the news of the passing of Sir John Swan. No person has done for Bermuda, both on Island and on the world stage, as much as this National Hero of ours.

Sir John and I were great friends. A friendship deepened following the death of his lovely wife, Jackie, many years ago. When we started to meet every Saturday morning for breakfast. Whatever the topic, family, history, politics, race, or the economy, he spoke with knowledge and passion. He did not care about rumours. He was driven by ideas. He was a contrarian. If I gave my opinion on an issue, he often took an opposite view. Done, I believe, to expand my mind and help me to consider angles that I had not considered.

He had a love of Bermuda and a yearning to learn unparalleled by anyone I have ever met. He had a special and unique talent to make you feel better about yourself after engaging with him. You almost always left with a smile on your face. If Sir John liked and trusted you, there was nothing he would not do for you. I am a better person because of my close friendship with Sir John.

To Sir John's children, Alison, Amanda, and Nicholas, thank you for sharing your extraordinary father with all of Bermuda. He was the best of Bermuda. I will miss him greatly.

Independent Senator John Wight.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock.

Would any other Senator care to speak on congratulatory and/or obituary speeches?

Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President. I have a few observations and congratulations, celebrations today.

First off, I did spend quite a lot of time this weekend with Madam President. We firstly met on Saturday morning at the King's Birthday Parade, and a wonderful celebration of all of our uniformed services. And I think. . . I have to say the 21-gun salute always gets me. But it was great to see the residents and tourists alike standing on the sidelines watching. But I want to say it was a proud moment to share with our uniformed services who serve our Island.

And then on Sunday afternoon, I again was with Madam President at the . . . for the Evensong Ser-

vice at St. Mary's to celebrate, or to, I guess, celebrate 29 years of faithful service by the retired Archdeacon Emeritus, the Venerable Andrew Doughty. He had been a minister at St. Mary's for 29 years. He made a very poignant sermon in which he said there had only been five ministers in 99 years at that church and they will be celebrating 400 years of some form of religious institution on that hillside, which I think was quite incredible.

I also want to extend congratulations to the organisers of the Carnival weekend. I did not attend, but I had a house guest in from Tampa who took part in many of the festivities. She was thoroughly impressed by all of the events. And I am very heartened to see that the police and everyone's safety guidance was taken, was heeded. And I think everyone enjoyed those celebrations in a responsible manner.

Last night, I attended the ABIR student intern reception at Axa XL. [It was] great to see so many. I think they did not give us a number, I think, but it was definitely over 100 student interns as part of the ABIR (Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers) within their member companies. I think they are all studiously working away in those member companies. And I think it shows the pathways that are available to these students and the talent that is needed in our industry.

And to that end, this morning and over lunch, I attended the Athene Life Career Expo hosted by the life sector, trying to attract talent into that sector. I listened to Power Girl this morning and then the Premier do the opening remarks, and it was very well attended. So, I look forward to going back to that.

And just as a public service announcement, there is a public service career fair tomorrow down at Pier 6 again from 12:00 until 8:00. So, I would encourage anyone interested in careers in the public service to look out for that.

I will finish with . . . it is the World Cup. I am a big England supporter, so good luck to England tonight.

And happy Father's Day to all the fathers in this Chamber and across Bermuda for Sunday.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Senator Lindsay Simmons, you have the floor.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I want to give condolences to the family of Mrs. Janette . . . I'm sorry, Mrs. [Mary] Janette [Lousie] Burgess. She was a mother of nine. She had six girls, Lovette, Anternette, Dawnette, Norette, Suzette, and Juliette. Sons, Norris Jr., Mackie, and Phillip. She was the proud wife of Norris Burgess.

I just want to say that this was an extraordinary family. They were huge in the community. Dr. Kyjuan Brown is her grandson. Nigel Burgess is her grandson.

Some very influential people that are in this Island. They were very into sports, and especially cricket.

And Mrs. Burgess was the queen of the family. And she raised her children and grandchildren to show love to everybody. And she is going to be sorely missed, actually, laying her to rest today.

So, I was saddened that I couldn't attend her funeral today. But I wish her family condolences and let their heart not be troubled. She is at peace.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Yes, Senator David Rogers, you have the floor.

Sen. David Rogers: Thank you so much, Madam President.

Once again, I would like to give congratulations to . . . well, it is graduation season. And Bermuda Institute tends to be the first one. They tend to get out early. So, at the beginning of graduation season, I was privileged to attend their service. And it was a fantastic service. The music was amazing. It is always wonderful to see young people succeed. It always makes me laugh, the banter, at least in this room, about Berkeleyites, whose class was the best, whose team was the best. When we have a clear, definitive BI, that is clearly the best. So, it was nice to go back and feel the love from Bermuda Institute.

Specifically, I would like to congratulate Jasmine Showers. She is my pseudo godchild. I am actually the godfather of her sister. But she kind of comes with the package. So, I am very proud of her and what she has accomplished.

I was also fortunate to attend another graduation a little earlier. It was Howard University, very different service. Once again, one of my pseudo-children was graduating. And there are quite a number of Bermudian students graduating at the time. But it was a very different experience as the keynote speaker was the mayor of DC. And you may not know, but she is not exactly the most popular with the young people. So, they protested as respectfully as possible, I guess, as you can protest. They turned their backs on her because they felt that she did not push back far enough.

What they felt was a grasp of power, especially an aggressive grasp of power from the federal state. So, it was heartening to see our children willing to put themselves on the line for a country that is not necessarily their own. And when they do return to the Island, I look forward to seeing them in the public discourse.

And then finally, I had the privilege of attending the women's football international friendly against — now I have done it, I should have written it down. But it does not matter who . . . we won.

[Laughter]

Sen. David Rogers: So, it was fantastic. I personally am not a sportsman. Never have been. Never claimed to be. But it was not wasted on me the level of talent these young ladies have. It is absolutely fantastic. They have a storied history ahead of them. I mean, a storied future ahead of them. So, I am very proud to be a part of that.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Rogers.

Would any other Senator . . . Senator Mischa Fubler, you have the floor.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to start by associating myself with the condolences for Mrs. Burgess. Reading through the programme today around her obituary, it was notable that she met her longtime husband at the Darrell & Seaman store. And that is close to home as that is my great-great-grandfather, who was a paragon of the community there in Flatts with that store. And so, my heart goes out to the Burgess family. And I hope you find peace.

And, Madam President, moving on to congratulations, I would like to associate myself . . . there were several there [at] the Bermuda women's football team, of course. I think in previous sessions, I mentioned the encouragement to the nation to provide similar levels of support to the women's team that we do for the men. And as my colleague has highlighted, they perform quite well and for entertainment.

[Inaudible interjection]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Yes, exactly.

And so also extending . . . associating myself with the congratulations to the ABIR interns. I also had the pleasure of joining them at their commencement ceremony (I do not know if I want to call it some such). They had a networking event where several of us were in attendance to give them the opportunity to talk through their placements and their plans. And it is welcoming to see that the international business community is developing the pipeline, as it were, and prioritising our youth.

Moving on, I would also like to associate myself with the congratulations for the organisers and promoters of the Bermuda Carnival that straddles our Heroes long weekend. I was in attendance at one of the events. I went to Waves and got in the water. It is good fun. And so, kudos to them. We had a great time. It was well organised.

And finally, Madam President, I would like to extend congratulations to Sakari Famous, who bested her previous high jump record, setting a new national record in high jump at 1.85 metres, which is very tall.

The President: Hmmm.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Yes, right. And those of you need to do the math conversion, right? There are like 1.6 kilometres to a mile.

[Inaudible interjection]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: A metre is close to a yard. So almost two metres is, you know, right? Six or seven feet is impressive. And so, in any event, Madam President, congratulations to her. And I wish her continued success in her sport of choice.

And on that note, I yield the remainder of my time.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Fubler.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Madam Attorney General, Minister of Justice Wilkerson, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President.

I would first like to join the condolences in relation to Mrs. Janette Burgess. She is the mother of my very good friend, Norette Simmons. She is my friend and neighbour. And to see, you know, how her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren just adored her. She was that Proverbs 31 woman, you know, held up by her family. A woman of work, a woman of reason who, and she passed down, Madam President, her standards to her children and so on.

And a really funny story I would just share. Over the holiday weekend, while some people were Carnival-ing, other people were at the beaches with families. And her daughter, Norette, said a couple of younger girls came to the beach looking as if in Carnival-type attire. And she said to them, *This is not something my mother would approve of.* And she called them up, and she said, *Listen, do you see that there are small children and families here today? If you are going to the Carnival, fine. But if you are going to be here, you ought to cover up a bit.* And they took that advice, and they did, and sometimes younger people need just some guidance, if it is given kindly. And that was, that was the product of Mrs. Burgess. She was a woman of really high standards, and her children carry those standards. and, you know, my granddaughter is with her granddaughter often. They go to Sunday school together. And so, it is important to honour where that comes from.

And so, I just want the family to know, although I thought we would have an early day today and I would get to the funeral late, but it was not to be that day today. But that our thoughts and prayers certainly over this entire side of the House, because the family were very, very huge PLP supporters and very huge in Hamilton parish, kind of the backbone and advice centre for things going on in the community.

And I am really, really glad that they were publicly honoured, both Mrs. Burgess and her husband earlier in the year at an event at Francis Patton School, a community event. And they were especially honoured that day. And so, for her to have passed not that long afterwards, it is very important that we do that while people are alive. So, I know she knew how loved she was by her children in the community. Thank you, Madam President.

And in terms of congratulations, I certainly join my colleagues in congratulating the ABIR interns that has been going a while. And it was a wonderful opportunity, colleagues on this side, along with Senator Cunningham, to be there and to talk to young people about where their career aspirations are going and how they are starting, and to give them some advice and encouragement. So, it was a really good opportunity.

And with that, Madam President, I will close my comments. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Minister Wilkerson.

And I would just like, as you heard, Senator Cunningham and I spent a lot of time [together] over the weekend. We were at the birthday parade, the King's Birthday Parade on Front Street. And we certainly were together at the retirement function they had for Deacon Andrew Doughty at . . . in Warwick. And where else . . . Uniformed Service Parade. Yes, and the Carnival weekend.

So, with that, we will now move on.

Minister Wilkerson.

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Senate adjourn until July 1st.

The President: Thank you.

Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Hearing none.

Senators, with that, Senate stands adjourned until July 1st.

[Crosstalk]

The President: It was the 1st. Yes. Just to confirm.

So, thank you all for your attendance today and input. It has been a good session.

Thank you.

[At 2:59 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 1 July 2026]

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