



Ministerial Statement to the House of Assembly

Update on Planned Amendments to the Motor Car Act

By

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Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to update this Honorable House on two important initiatives being introduced by the Ministry of Tourism Development and Transport. This includes plans to amend the Motor Car (Construction, Equipment and Use) Regulations 1952 to ensure that the enabling legislation and accompanying regulations are aligned with the current policy as it relates to window tint on public service vehicles, and by extension to private motor cars. The second item is the plan to allow the use of hands free communication devices such as the very familiar Bluetooth technology.

Mr. Speaker, the Motor Car (Construction, Equipment and Use) Regulations 1952, makes provision for the Minister in his discretion to exempt any class of motor car from complying with all or any of the requirements as it relates to window tint.

Early last year Cabinet approved a modified Vehicle Tint Policy for public service vehicles as recommended by the Transport Control Department (TCD); and the policy change was proposed as a result of the long standing custom and practice of the sitting Minister exercising his/her right to use discretion to approve or not approve a request for permission to allow a window tint that is very close to the legal limit.

Mr. Speaker, in particular, Ministerial discretion was previously used to allow the importation of the Toyota Alphard motor taxi (for example) with the understanding that some of its windows were fitted with manufacturer's tint that is actually a darker tint than permitted by the regulations.

Mr. Speaker, this government is doing all it can to facilitate commerce in Bermuda and the decision to allow darker tint in Public Service Vehicles demonstrates our support for some of our front line Bermuda ambassadors our Taxi Owners and Operators. This decision has prompted this administration to embrace a greater tolerance and acceptance for slightly darker window tints on all motor cars.

It is generally understood and accepted that tinted windows in vehicles provide several benefits. The tint can:

- ✓ reduce the ultra-violet light, heat and glare from the sun
- ✓ assist with the performance and efficiency of the air conditioning system

- ✓ reduce the amount of fuel required to operate the vehicle thus having a knock on benefit with our carbon footprint.

Mr. Speaker, it is now our intention to adopt and implement the recommendation and include private motor cars in the proposed legislative amendments to the provisions for visual transmission for light specifications in the Motor Car (Construction, Equipment and Use) Regulations 1952.

Mr. Speaker, the second amendment that will be forthcoming is one that will allow for motor cars to be outfitted with hands-free devices such as the very common Bluetooth technology. We have all seen the increase in the use of technology in our daily lives and the hands free technology has advanced to where functions that traditionally required the use of hand are now executed by voice and this has proved to be very beneficial particularly in the transportation industry.

Mr. Speaker, this administration is extremely sensitive to the impact that road traffic collisions have on this community and some of us may have been impacted directly by traffic collisions, and we are aware that the use of technology does contribute to some of these collisions. Although the empirical data is not yet there to categorically state that the use of communications devices while driving are contributing to more accidents, we do know that the majority of our accidents are the result of

driver/operator inattention and in many cases a hand held communications device could have played a role.

Mr. Speaker, again this administration has listened to the people of Bermuda and it has been decided that the Motor Car (Construction, Equipment and Use) Regulations will also be amended to allow for qualified hands free communication devices to be utilized in motor cars.

Mr. Speaker, our ministry is also well aware that significant portions of the Motor Car Act are somewhat dated; these planned amendments will address two of the areas that have been cause for concern and they will move us closer to meeting the needs of the 21st century road user and our Ministry will continue with further amendments that are deemed warranted and appropriate.

Thank You