



Ministerial Statement to the House of Assembly

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***THE GROUNDING OF THE NORWEGIAN DAWN CRUISE SHIP***

By

**The Hon. Shawn G. Crockwell, JP, MP  
Minister of Tourism Development and Transport**

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**Mr. Speaker,** I rise today to inform this Honourable House on the Norwegian Dawn cruise ship grounding incident that occurred on Tuesday of this week.

**Mr. Speaker,** as you all would be aware, the cruise ship Norwegian Dawn ran aground in the North Channel at approximately 6 p.m. Bermuda time on Tuesday May 19<sup>th</sup> after leaving Kings Wharf in Dockyard on its regularly scheduled departure. Apparently, the ship had a temporary malfunction of its steering system, causing the vessel to veer off course, resulting in the vessel making contact with the sea bed.

**Mr. Speaker,** at the time of the grounding the Norwegian Dawn was carrying 2,675 passengers and 1,062 crew members on board. Fortunately, there were no reported injuries, no water ingress, no oil spillage or pollution threat and the vessel remained stable. Immediately following the grounding the assigned local Branch Pilot Mr. Reggie Matthie informed RCC Bermuda Radio and the emergency response operation began. The Warden of Pilots Mr. Rudy Cann was appointed as the On Scene Commander (OSC) and he along with the Harbor Master Mr. David

Simmons and the Chief Surveyor Captain Pat Nawaratne were transferred from shore to the Norwegian Dawn by the Pilot Boat St. David and a Marine Police quick response vessel. The local tugs and small work boats were deployed along with divers from Crisson Marine that carried out external hull inspections to report on the extent of damage and visually determine how much of the vessel's bottom was aground. This early information and report was extremely important and aided the decision to attempt to refloat the vessel at the next scheduled high tide at 10:22 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker,** at 10:22 p.m. the operation to refloat the vessel commenced using the ship's propulsion system with the assistance of the tugs Powerful and Edward M. Stowe. At 11:19 p.m. the Norwegian Dawn was successfully refloated and the vessel was put to safe anchorage at 11:40 p.m. The Pilots remained onboard overnight and then piloted the vessel to Heritage Wharf and the vessel was secured alongside at 7:45 a.m. Wednesday morning. Senior officials and technical officers from Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) along with Classification Surveyors arrived in Bermuda early Wednesday morning and joined the vessel. Once onboard they conducted further inspections and assessments to ensure the integrity of the vessel's hull and internal structure were maintained. Upon completion of this assessment, the team confirmed the structural integrity of the ship was sound, the technical issue which caused the steering malfunction was corrected, and provided authorization for the vessel to continue with the scheduled voyage to Boston. The Norwegian Dawn departed Heritage Wharf at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon and is scheduled for an on-time arrival in Boston today.

**Mr. Speaker,** needless to say, the grounding of a cruise ship, in particular one that is 965 feet long, 92,000 tons and carrying almost 4,000 people is quite an ordeal. I

am very thankful that no-one was hurt and reportedly the damage appears to be minimal and to quote some of the passengers – “there was no panic and everything went well”.

**Mr. Speaker,** our collective response to this incident speaks volumes about what we are capable of achieving when we work together. With the scheduled arrival of the Norwegian Breakaway on Wednesday morning we had three ships in Dockyard, two alongside at King's and Heritage Wharf and one at anchor with close to 8,000 passengers combined, and we were able to effectively manage and transport passengers. This was no small feat and it was achieved by the direct and indirect efforts of many people that rose to the occasion.

**Mr. Speaker,** I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who was involved on-scene to refloat the vessel, their level of professionalism and technical expertise was clearly evident. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution and efforts of those involved on the ground on Wednesday morning including the WEDCo team, BTA staff, ferry, bus, taxis and minibus operators.

**Mr. Speaker,** in closing I would like to make special mention of the Marine and Ports team, including our Pilots, the Maritime Operations Center, and tug boat crews and commend them for their efforts in successfully refloating the Norwegian Dawn.

**Thank you Mr. Speaker**