Second Sitting of the 23rd Meeting of the First Session of the 13th Legislature

THE PARLIAMENT OF TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

2 JUNE 2026

(Parliament)

Hon. Speaker

Speaker

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PRAYER

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT AND CALL TO PRAYER

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Good morning. I now call the second sitting of the 23rd meeting, the meeting of the First Session of the 13th Legislature of the Parliament of the Turks and Caicos Islands, to order. Honourable Members, I now call on our Chaplain, Bishop Cleita III, to pray for this meeting.

OPENING PRAYER

Chaplin:

Luke chapter 6, 47, 48. Whosoever cometh to me and heareth my saying and does them, I will show you to whom he is like. He's like a man which build a house and dig deep and lay a foundation on a rock. And when the flood arose and the stream beat violently upon that house and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock.

Strong Today, Secure Tomorrow, Part 2. Building strong foundation require intentional discipline and obedience. Spiritual and moral practical principle must guide your decision today. To secure stability, growth, and divine favor for tomorrow. God called us to deliberate foundation laying that guarantees lasting impact. Number 1, the foundation of character and integrity. Character and integrity ensures that the foundation you build is respected, honourable, and lasting. Integrity provides credibility and strength to every foundation.

Growth is character, and hence resilience during challenges. Number 2, the foundation of vision and purpose. A clear understanding of your God-given purpose guides every action and decision and strengthens the foundation for tomorrow. Purpose-driven living focuses resources, energy, and intention effectively. Strategic planning ensures stability and growth and persistence. maintaining the integrity of your foundation under pressure. Nehemiah rebuilds Jerusalem walls with clarity of purpose and strategic planning, laying a strong foundation for the city's future security. Building strong foundation today secure a greater tomorrow.

Wisdom, faith, integrity, and purpose forms the pillar upon which a life and country can endure trials and experience lasting growth. Foundation determines not only success but also stability, favor, and divine alignment. So be intentional about what you build your life and country upon. Every decision, attitude, and action is a block in your foundation. By laying good, God-centered, wisdom-driven, purpose-orientated foundation, your tomorrow will be secure, prosperous, and victorious.

OPENING PRAYER CONCLUSION

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Amen.

Chaplin:

And the Parliament say—

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

TRANSITION TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BUSINESS

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Please be seated. Honourable Premier.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETINGS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Good morning.

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

MOTION TO REARRANGE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 49, I wish to rearrange the business of this Honourable Parliament so that Government business can have precedence over all of the other business. In that regard, Mr. Speaker, I move that item number 18, Orders of the Day, be taken as item number 2.

CLARIFICATION ON ORDER PAPER ITEM

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Premier, 15. Item 15.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Sorry.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

On this order paper, it's 15.

MOTION TO REARRANGE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Oh, yes. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. My bad. I move that item number 15, Orders of the Day, be taken as item number 2. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TRANSITION TO ORDERS OF THE DAY AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF BILL READING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you. No, no, you don't need a second. Thank you very much, Honourable Premier. Good morning again, Honourable Members, for being with us this morning. I also want to welcome the strangers in the gallery with us this morning. I want to welcome persons who are listening to us via Radio Turks and Caicos and also those who are watching via our social media platforms.

Honourable Members, I want to wish my daughter Brianna a happy 18th birthday today. She's in the UK studying and I want to wish her a happy birthday. And I now have an adult, she reminded me this morning. I will now like to return to the order paper, and we are now at orders of the day, the second reading of bills. And we'll have the second reading of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026, to be moved by the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING MOTION

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Honourable Premier. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 92, I move that the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 be read for a second time. Do I have a seconder?

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING VOTE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Public Safety that the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 be now read a second time. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Honourable Premier.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING DEBATE

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026, in the absence of the Minister for Tourism, who is away attending the Caribbean Tourism Ministerial event. This Bill is not merely about creating another institution. It is about preparing the Turks and Caicos Islands for a future that is arriving far more rapidly than many appreciate.

It is about ensuring that the governance of our most important industry keeps pace with the unprecedented expansion now underway across our islands. And it is about ensuring that tourism continues to work, not only for visitors and investors, but first and foremost for the people of these Turks and Caicos Islands. Tourism continues to contribute more than three quarters of our economic activity and remains the principal driver of employment, entrepreneurship, investment and Government revenue. Our prosperity is inextricably linked to

the performance of the sector.

Stayover arrivals continue to strengthen, investment continues to deepen, development activity has accelerated across multiple islands. The Turks and Caicos Islands has secured its position as one of the premier luxury destinations in the world. Success creates new obligations. The challenge before us is no longer how to generate tourism growth, but how to govern tourism growth.

That is the purpose of this Bill. For decades, tourism institutions across the region were designed primarily as marketing agencies. Their role was to promote destinations, attract visitors, and build brand visibility. That model is no longer sufficient. Modern tourism management requires far more: destination planning, sustainability frameworks, tourism intelligence and data analytics, product development, stakeholder coordination, community inclusion, environmental stewardship, strategic management of carrying capacity and growth. This Bill reflects that evolution. It embodies those functions in statute through its objects, functions, data requirements and reporting obligations, creating an institution that is structurally equipped to manage a modern tourism economy. Let me address a critical point of misunderstanding.

This Bill does not abandon the Destination Marketing and Management Organization concept. The concept remains intact. The operational structure—marketing, stakeholder engagement, destinations development, tourism intelligence—remains fundamentally unchanged. Those very functions are preserved and reinforced in the Bill, including marketing and promotion, tourism policy and strategy advisory, sustainable development, stakeholder coordination, tourism intelligence and data systems, and importantly, community tourism development.

What has changed is not the concept. What is changing is the governance and accountability framework with which that concept operates. This bill converts a private nonprofit structure into a statutory authority with legal personality, parliamentary accountability, ministerial oversight, formal reporting obligations, audited financial statements under the Public Finance Management Act, defined governance structures and decision rights. In short, the mission remains, the structure evolves, the accountability is strengthened.

I wish to make a personal point, and I do so deliberately and without reservation. In the absence of the Minister of Tourism, I stand to present this bill, but I do not do so merely in a procedural sense. I stand as the principal architect of the policy direction that led to the establishment of the Destination Marketing and Management Organization. The DMO was my initiative. It was conceived at a time when it was clear that the Turks and Caicos Islands had outgrown a purely promotional model of tourism and needed to move toward a more integrated destination management framework. It provided agility in marketing execution, stronger collaboration between government and the private sector, early development of tourism intelligence capacity, a platform for destination-wide coordination.

Those were not insignificant outcomes. But the DMMO was always, in essence, a transitional institutional form. It was structured as a private entity. It was not designed to fully operate within the fiscal audit and reporting disciplines required under the Public Finance Management Framework. It was not built to manage the scale of public resources now being developed in the tourism sector. I would be the first to admit, in retrospect, that it was not designed with the level of institutional maturity now required for a sector of this magnitude, and it did not align with the legislation. These were not failures of concepts. They were limitations of institutional form.

And as the sector expanded, those limitations became clearer. And so, I accept that fully, and I expect and accept the responsibility for why we are here today. Where the model advanced our national interests, that success belongs to the country. Where governance gaps emerge, as I said earlier, I take responsibility for ensuring that they are corrected. This bill is that correction. It builds on the foundation.

It addresses the structural limitations. It formalizes the model in law. It aligns it with modern public accountability standards. That is not retreat. That is institutional maturation. Any suggestions that this reform arises from failure misunderstands the issue. The central issue has been governance and leadership continuity. In particular, the institution has not had a permanent Chief Executive Officer, coordination across functions, performance discipline.

This bill addresses that directly. It establishes the CEO in statute, defines executive authority clearly, provides continuity mechanisms during vacancies. This is not only structural reform, it is leadership reform. One of the most important features of this Bill is the clarification of decision rights. This Bill establishes a clear hierarchy: Minister—policy direction and ultimate accountability; Board—governance, oversight, performance monitoring; CEO—executive and operational management; Executive management team—functional delivery. This clarity did not previously exist at the required level that it does now. A modern public institution that this bill establishes is comprehensive in its institutional design, and it includes statutory board composition with private sector participation. Standing committees for audit, for risk, for HR, marketing, and product development; a full executive management structure; tourism intelligence systems and data obligations; annual business plans; quarterly and annual reporting to Parliament.

It also embeds conflict of interest rules, integrity commission disclosures, audit and compliance systems, financial controls under the PFM Act. This is a complete governance framework. Accountability for public resources. The Government now invests substantial resources into tourism. That requires transparency, oversight, accountability. The Bill ensures audited financial statements, parliamentary reporting, business planning discipline, public disclosure mechanisms. This is entirely consistent with modern public financial management practice. And the public-private partnership is preserved.

Private sector collaboration is not diminished. In fact, it is strengthened. The Bill embeds private sector representation on the Board, mandates stakeholder consultation, provides for formal partnership and MOUs. The principle of partnership

remains intact. What changes is that it operates with a clearer governance structure. Transition with continuity is what the Bill promotes. The transition is carefully structured. The Bill dissolves the DMO as we know it, transfers all assets, rights and obligations, maintains branding and operational continuity.

This ensures no disruption in execution. A national imperative dictates that the change that we are undertaking is realized if we are going to keep pace with what is happening in the tourism sector. We are entering a new phase of national development. Tourism expansion is accelerating across all islands, and the Government is introducing policies to ensure that it does benefit all islands.

The key question is, who governs that growth? The answer: this authority will guide standards for sustainable development, support balanced islands growth, protect natural and cultural assets, ensure equitable participation. This is not optional. It is essential. And so, I go back because I want to take full responsibility. That is what leadership is about. Change is inevitable.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, Tourism continues to contribute more than three quarters of our economic activity and remains the principal driver of employment, entrepreneurship, investment and Government revenue. Our prosperity is inextricably linked to the performance of the sector. Stayover arrivals continue to strengthen, investment continues to deepen, development activity has accelerated across multiple islands. The Turks and Caicos Islands has secured its position as one of the premier luxury destinations in the world.

Mr. Speaker, success creates new obligations. The challenge before us is no longer how to generate tourism growth. The challenge before us is now how to govern tourism growth. That, Mr. Speaker, is the purpose of this Bill. For decades, tourism institutions across the region were designed primarily as marketing agencies. Their role was to promote destinations, attract visitors, and build brand visibility. That model is no longer sufficient. Modern tourism management requires far more: destination planning, sustainability frameworks, tourism intelligence and data analytics, product development, stakeholder coordination, community inclusion, environmental stewardship, and strategic management of carrying capacity and growth.

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What has changed is not the concept. What is changing is the governance and accountability framework with which that concept operates. This bill converts a private nonprofit structure into a statutory authority with legal personality, parliamentary accountability, ministerial oversight, formal reporting obligations, audited financial statements under the Public Finance Management Act, defined governance structures and decision rights. In short, the mission remains, the structure evolves, the accountability is strengthened.

I wish to make a personal point, and I do so deliberately and without reservation. In the absence of the Minister of Tourism, I stand to present this bill, but I do not do so merely in a procedural sense. I stand as the principal architect of the policy direction that led to the establishment of the Destination Marketing and Management Organization. The DMO was my initiative. It was conceived at a time when it was clear that the Turks and Caicos Islands had outgrown a purely promotional model of tourism and needed to move toward a more integrated destination management framework. It provided agility in marketing execution, stronger collaboration between government and the private sector, early development of tourism intelligence capacity, and a platform for destination-wide coordination.

Those were not insignificant outcomes. The DMMO was always, in essence, a transitional institutional form. It was structured as a private entity. It was not designed to fully operate within the fiscal audit and reporting disciplines required under the Public Finance Management Framework. It was not built to manage the scale of public resources now being developed in the tourism sector. I would be the first to admit, in retrospect, that it was not designed with the level of institutional maturity required for a sector of this magnitude, and it did not align with the legislation. These were not failures of concept. They were limitations of institutional form.

And as the sector expanded, those limitations became clearer. I accept that fully, and I expect and accept the responsibility for why we are here today. Where the model advanced our national interests, that success belongs to the country. Where governance gaps emerge, I take responsibility for ensuring that they are corrected.

This bill is that correction. It builds on the foundation. It addresses the structural limitations. It formalizes the model in law. It aligns it with modern public accountability standards. That is not retreat. That is institutional maturation. Any suggestions that this reform arises from failure misunderstands the issue. The central issue has been governance and leadership continuity. In particular, the institution has not had a permanent Chief Executive Officer, coordination across functions, performance discipline. This bill addresses that directly. It establishes the CEO in statute, defines executive authority clearly, provides continuity mechanisms during vacancies.

This is not only structural reform, it is leadership reform. One of the most important features of this Bill is the clarification of decision rights. This Bill establishes a clear hierarchy: Minister—policy direction and ultimate accountability; Board—governance, oversight, performance monitoring; CEO—executive and operational management; Executive management team—functional delivery. This clarity did not previously exist at the required level.

A modern public institution that this bill establishes is comprehensive in its institutional design, and it includes statutory board composition with private sector participation, standing committees for audit, risk, HR, marketing, and product development; a full executive management structure; tourism intelligence systems and data obligations; annual business plans; quarterly and annual reporting to Parliament. It also embeds conflict of interest rules, integrity commission disclosures, audit and compliance systems, financial controls under the PFM Act. This is a complete governance framework. Accountability for public resources.

The Government now invests substantial resources into tourism. That requires transparency, oversight, accountability. The Bill ensures audited financial statements, parliamentary reporting, business planning discipline, public disclosure mechanisms. This is entirely consistent with modern public financial management practice. The public-private partnership is preserved. Private sector collaboration is not diminished. In fact, it is strengthened. The Bill embeds private sector representation on the Board, mandates stakeholder consultation, provides for formal partnership and MOUs.

The principle of partnership remains intact. What changes is that it operates with a clearer governance structure. Transition with continuity is what the Bill promotes. The transition is carefully structured. The Bill dissolves the DMO as we know it, transfers all assets, rights and obligations, maintains branding and operational continuity. This ensures no disruption in execution. A national imperative dictates that the change that we are undertaking is realized if we are going to keep pace with what is happening in the tourism sector. We are entering a new phase of national development.

Tourism expansion is accelerating across all islands, and the Government is introducing policies to ensure that it does benefit all islands. The key question is, who governs that growth? The answer: this authority will guide standards for sustainable development, support balanced islands growth, protect natural and cultural assets, ensure equitable participation. This is not optional. It is essential.

And so, I go back because I want to take full responsibility. That is what leadership is about, right? Change is inevitable.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

And this is not the era or the age of the Persians, the Medes and the Persians, who say, what I have written I have written. In the modern age where agility is required and where direction depends on the reality on the ground, it is important to make the necessary changes to keep pace with that reality. As the architect of the DMMO, I believe I have a responsibility to ensure its ultimate success, and that is what this bill is about. You will hear today all sorts of insinuations.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

And you will hear all sorts of arguments that have absolutely nothing to do with this bill. This will be a time for grandstanding by those persons who don't understand and may not even be interested in trying to understand what is the ultimate goal, and for those persons who themselves are not necessarily interested in the balanced tourism growth of our TCI who may have an extremely narrow view and are extremely interested and intransigent when it comes to change. This bill is not about replacing a model, Mr. Speaker. It is not about replacing a model because that model essentially remains as it was conceived in 2023 when the bill was introduced and when the institution was established, or 2022.

It is about strengthening its foundation. The concept remains, the governance evolves, the accountability is brought into the modern era. This is the next step in institutional development of the tourism sector. This bill is necessary. This institution is necessary. It is timely, and it is in the national interest. Madam Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, I suppose I started looking at this last week when you were still acting, so it's riddled with Madam Speaker.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

I didn't catch that.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

As I said several times during the last few minutes, leadership is not about comfort. It is about controversy. It is about standing, taking a stand, acting on the conviction of one's character, conviction of one's evidentially based position. This bill comes from that place, and I therefore support and commend the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 to this Honourable House.

When we get in the Committee of Supply, it will be very clear to those who have an objective interest in the development of tourism, the sustainable development of tourism, and anyone who has been following the government's policy, I would have a hard time, if they are being objective, to deviate from the

principle of this bill. With that said, I therefore support and commend the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 to this Honourable House.

I thank you.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Premier, for your presentation of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026. Honourable Members, the floor is now open for debate on this bill. Are there any contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for his contribution.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Pleasant good morning to you, Mr. Speaker. Pleasant good morning to all our people throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands, especially the people of my constituency of Grand Turk South and Salt Cay, right here in the nation's capital, Mr. Speaker. Pleasant good morning to all those who join us in the gallery. We're always good to have you.

We see Mrs. Misick, and we see our patron of the House, Mr. Williams, who's always here with us listening to the work of the people. And of course, Bishop, it's always wonderful to have your devotions and your prayers every morning as we start the session. Pleasant good morning to all our members. Mr. Speaker, again, let me associate myself with the words of condolences that were offered to the bereaved families of the Turks and Caicos Islands yesterday, and words of celebration, the celebratory remarks for even your daughter at 18 years old.

I believe now your hair is going to turn gray, Mr. Speaker. It's a different challenge. And as you know, daughters will always be your daughters no matter how old they get. So it is a lifelong journey. But Mr. Speaker, I do rise to make my contributions to the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026. Contrary to what the Premier may believe, I do support wholeheartedly this bill. And I believe that will be the last time they'll clap for me because I will get into some stuff. As the Premier says, I will get into some stuff, and I have to put on record it's not that I am against tourism or anything, Mr. Speaker.

It is our job to go through the bills, to go through and see where it doesn't serve our people in our country. I'm not saying that they're doing anything maliciously inside this bill, but we have to identify shortcomings, and we have to bring context to it. That is what we get paid for as lawyers. We have to go through this document, all the documents and signs that are brought towards us, and look to see if it's serving our people and make the suggestions in committee.

If it doesn't, then we just fully support it. But for the Premier to say a lot of us, we do not understand the industry, that is why we were against it, or we do not care about what is happening in the country. There's no need for that. However, I would say when the Premier started, I looked around and said, wait a second, is this the year 2022 or is this 2026?

It was déjà vu all over again. The same argument that we heard when the premier was announcing his baby, who he claims he is the principal architect of, the experienced TCI, the DMO. We heard those same arguments that he did in 2022. We heard it today at the beginning before he got into the bill.

We didn't have to be here today if only the Honourable Premier would have listened from then. If only he had listened from then.

DEBATE ON TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Order!

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Maybe it's because we are in the opposition that he doesn't have to listen to us, or maybe it's because we are not inside the industry. You all don't know what you're talking about, this is my field or my advisor's field, so we don't have to listen to you.

From the time this bill came out, at the beginning I was making noise about closing down the tourist board. I pulled up the articles I wrote, highlighted here, and I mentioned that instead of closing down, why not transform the tourist board? I said let's enhance this board, change its function, bring in all the managers, bring in all the expertise, change their mission, core values, mission statement, vision statement. Let's change all those things. But no, Premier, we need a DMO, we need Experience TCI.

This is the way to go, this is what is happening in all the regions. I said in the article and in the speech of May 4th, 2022, why are we following other destinations to support this? Why not create our own model that works for the Turks and Caicos Islands? I am happy we have a model that can work. You created the Tourism Authority. Now this is where we were thinking, and hence the tourist board changed its name, rebranded, just like we did with the statistics department.

We changed it to Statistics Authority. We didn't have to lay off staff, go through all that redundancy. If the staff were at that level, they would have a similar position in the next authority. If you weren't performing, there are ways for the government to get rid of you.

In 2022, we told the Premier this. After spending millions of dollars of the people's money on the failed project, his baby, which he was the principal architect of, millions spent, I wanted to get out real quickly, and I asked the member if he was speaking so I could run and get my budget books to

inform the people of how much money was spent in this failed DMO of the Premier.

By his own admission, it is his baby. He's the chef, the cook, and the bottle washer for the DMO. He said not the Minister of Tourism. It is his baby, and he called himself the principal architect. So I'm not being unfair in laying this at his feet. He said he invited it to be laid at his feet. This is what leadership is for. But the main thing is we didn't have to be here. I think about the first year we spent about $6-7 million.

Please forgive me, I didn't want to disrespect the Honourable Premier and run out to get my budget book while we were speaking. No, I wouldn't do that. We can suspend if you want. No, that's okay, I can go.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

I think we need to have the exact numbers that were spent on the consultancy and the establishment, because to put out there to the public that $7 million was spent is irresponsible, because I can promise you it is not that.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Okay, Honourable Members, this Honourable Parliament is hereby suspended for 10 minutes.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable members, this Honourable House now resumes its sitting. Please be seated. On behalf of the Opposition, you can proceed with your contribution to the debate.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. For those just tuning in, we are debating the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026, and I am responding to the Premier's address to the bill as he was the mover and self-proclaimed principal architect. When we broke session for ten minutes, we were disputing the numbers. As the Premier said, if you are wrong, you have to admit you are wrong.

Members of the public, members inside the House, I was wrong in saying $7 million because it's much more than that. I understated it.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Wow.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Mr. Speaker, they are government books, and rightly so, on Yellow Pages, black and yellow. This is '24-'25. I tried to use a mid-year because '24-'25 will have some from back and some going forward. I have '25, '26, and so on. In '22-'23, the total expenditure was $2,417,583. '24-'25 the total is $6,837,220. So we are already up to $9,254,813.

So I was wrong. We already passed the $7 million that I stated. So again, I apologize for saying $7 million. We are already up to $9 million. And '25-'26, the year of this, is an additional $7,225,799. You know how much we are up to now? $16,480,612. And the projections for this year that came in was an additional $7,225,799.

So at the end of this year, a total of $21,226,737. Unless these figures given to us are incorrect for the budget.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

They are not.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

The Cabinet have approved—

Hon. Gordon Burton:

One moment.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Oh, sorry, I didn't see the light.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Premier, you have a point of order?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Point of elucidation. The member is suggesting that we shouldn't be spending any money on the promotion and management of tourism because that's the budget for tourism. He was intimating for the implementation of the establishment of the DMMO we spent $7 million, not the operating costs for the tourism body. Of course, we raised over $7 million last

year in income from the tourism destination fee to pay for all of that.

So that is the operational cost, not the setup cost. That is what it takes to run the destination.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much for that, Mr. Speaker. I feel like I'm in a courtroom. As he introduced new information, new things come out. We had to wind up the old tourist board. How much did that cost? How much did we have to pay in staff terminal benefits? If you want to talk about the setup, the whole cost of this is more than $7 million, as he alluded to, to set up. Then to get the offices, the persons in, and the initial subvention, that is way more than $7 million. Again, we can ask that question. I can put that parliamentary question there, how much it costs for the winding up of the old tourist board, paying the staff off, all that money, then setting up.

So it's even more than the $7 million. But let's go to the operational costs. Since the inception of the Premier's baby that he was the principal architect of, we have spent some $21,226,737. What did we get for our $21 million? After spending $21 million over the past couple of years, we are here at this point winding up. Would anybody say this was a good investment? Now, I agree with the Premier.

You have to be nimble. You have to change as new information is presented, and I applaud you for that. Persons who really study science and have that kind of mindset, when presented with new and credible information, do have a change in opinion. So it is right that whatever information the Premier got, cabinet members decided to go in a different direction.

There must be something. Something had to be wrong. Why hasn't the Premier told us what went wrong? If you're having full disclosure, why don't you tell us what went wrong or who messed up? Either it's a what, who, when, why, where. Why? So we cannot repeat the same mistakes.

You came to us in '22-'23 saying this is the best thing ever, it's state of the art, this DMO is the way forward, it's going to bring so much more tourism into the country, it's going to revolutionize tourism and the Turks and Caicos Islands, using Donald Trump's name.

You ain't seen nothing like this. This is the best thing ever. And where are we today? Yes, I agree for this Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026, but we could have prevented all that wastage. And be here from that time. When we suggested change, remodel, re-envision, reinvent the tourist board, change it around, Premier and your team, you could have said yes, I agree with that, but how are we going to do it? We're going to make it a statutory body, a tourism authority and all that. That's the coming of minds. That's what we were here for. We said what is supposed to be done and you said, okay, this is how we're going to do it.

We could have had this conversation from 4 years ago, saving our taxpayers a lot of money. This conversation is what we should have done, Honourable Premier, from 4 years ago when we told you that that wasn't the right way to do it. The idea— yes, we want tourism to grow, we want it to be managed properly, but how you had proposed as the principal architect of the DMO Experience TCI was not the right way to go. Many of us told you that.

The idea was good, but that wasn't the right way to go. Yes, I agree with what we have here today. This is what we should have seen.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Order.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Even from listening to persons from Experience TCI, they said even our model is now on shaky legs. That high-end exclusive destination model is now on shaky legs. This isn't me saying that—go back to the tapes, go back to the records. That is coming from the professionals inside the industry.

The Premier claims that we on the other side are not following. The Honourable Member, his private business is in the industry. He's not only the president, but also a client. He knows the industry. I studied that industry. I always tell people, if I wasn't a health professional, Minister of Health at that time, one of the ministries I would have loved to work in is tourism. I have a passion for tourism, and I'm sorry the Premier thinks we don't care about tourism. We know it is our goose that has been laying the golden eggs, but those eggs are starting to become bronze eggs, and that is from the professionals inside the industry.

They are warning us that we are losing that brand, that high exclusivity, luxurious destination brand that is on shaky legs. This is from them. If you listen to the Appropriations Committee, you would hear those things. If you listen to the words from persons in the industry, you will hear those things.

Other destinations are copying this model that we have. They are high-end, high-traffic destinations, but say, 'Hey, we can do what TCI does. Let's try and do it better.' So we have to compete. But after spending $21 million, we didn't have to go down that road. That is what I am telling the Honourable Premier. And he said that Experience TCI, just like how they painted persons before, painted us about TCI hospitals—state of the art, best thing ever, you never seen nothing like it. These were the words we heard about Experience TCI.

The DMO is going to revolutionize tourism in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Has it? Has your baby revolutionized tourism?

No.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Yes, it has.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

You are here now putting your baby to sleep. In fact, you're not putting your baby to sleep. I won't say what you're doing to your baby, because we're on the radio, but what you're doing now, having to come here and do to your baby, after bragging so much about your child, after promoting your child so much, Honourable Premier, and now we are here today.

It could have been avoided. I went through this bill and I do believe there are some wonderful things that this bill has identified. I love the section where they talk about the monthly reporting and at the end of the year the tourism authority or the board has to present a state of tourism to the minister. That is good.

Every year that is required. That is a good thing. The persons who drafted this bill, I have to give them a round of applause. They did a good job. There's still some things missing, but this is a good bill. But this bill is five years too late. That is what I'm saying. I am supporting it, and I would have been jumping up if this came in '22 or '23, when we were warning the Premier this was not the right way.

You didn't have to get rid of all the staff, go through all this firing, downsizing, and all that. You could have done an easy transition like we did with the Statistics Authority. Bring in all the professionals. When you look at the professionals they're saying this is going to have, it's in Clause 29.

It provides for the mandatory appointment of senior officers: Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, Chief Destination Development Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Cruise Tourism, Director of Human Resources, and Director of Compliance and Contracting. All those directors this authority is going to have, plus the staff to work under them, the deputies, managers, technical people. This is what we had envisioned. In my release, I told the Premier, let us bring in the professionals, let's create the positions needed.

But did he listen? No, not because the advice was bad. A lot of our people have a problem with taking advice from our own people. Many in the Turks and Caicos Islands believe that good advice can only come from the outside. I won't go into skin color and all that, but a lot of our people are that way.

I don't know why they feel that our people who live here, who have been watching, cannot have a good idea. I don't know if the Premier thinks that low of me that when I told him about this, because it's coming from me, there's some mischief or I'm not qualified to say that wasn't the right direction. But history has proven me right. What I was saying and what he was criticizing me for, four years ago, history has vindicated me.

All the statements in the newspapers, in the budget addresses here, which are public record, historic facts—these things happened. But did he listen? He's a Black man from Grand Turk. Suddenly he cannot know anything about tourism. This is the mindset I believe he has. I'm not saying he has it. This is what I believe he has.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Suddenly—

Hon. Gordon Burton:

One moment, please. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister for Home Affairs. Do you have a point of order or point of—

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Grateful, Mr. Speaker. Point of order. The member is imputing improper motive. Point of order 59.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Yes.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

If the member wants to cast himself as this humble boy from Grand Turk, that is up to him, but the Premier said no such thing. He is improperly placing a burden on the Premier's words that were not expressed.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Yes.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

I do agree with that, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, and I'd like to ask that it be withdrawn from the record.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Yes, but—

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to not agree with that because I say this is what I feel. I'm not saying that is what the Premier feels. This is what I feel that he thinks. That's what I said. This is what I feel that he thinks.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

So—

Hon. Gordon Burton:

But Honourable Leader of the Opposition, it doesn't matter what you feel. It's whether it's the truth or not. And it's nothing that he has ever said. You can have all the feelings in the world, but he has never intimated that he thinks that you don't have a say on tourism.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

He's never said that. But I didn't say he said that.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

But that's how you feel.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

DEBATE ON TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

This is just how I feel. Yes, but I didn't say he said that.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

You can't say it in Parliament.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

No, I can say what I feel. I cannot say what he stated. It'll be improved, or what I think he is, but what I feel, Mr. Speaker. I cannot have a feeling in Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

And I could also say that I would like for it to be removed from the record.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Mr. Speaker, it is your House, but I will remove that statement from the records. And I will try to refrain from feeling and stick to the words inside the book, Mr. Speaker. But for some reason, many Turks and Caicos Islanders do not like to take advice from their own people. They have a problem taking advice from their own people, Mr. Speaker.

Especially persons who they feel do not know anything, or are told to stick in their lane. Well, I can say that we are here today. Who's laughing now? Who was right and who was wrong? Mr. Speaker, this is going to make an impact on our tourism products. The bill addresses the makeup of the board, ensuring there must be members from each island—Salt Key, Middle Caicos, Grand Turk, South Caicos, North Caicos, Providenciales.

The chairman must come from the private sector, as explained in the bill, and must be a practitioner in the industry. The bill also discusses the assets of the institution. Clause 53 provides that membership ends when the organization is dissolved and makes it clear that members won't receive any share of assets. This needs clarification—what assets are we talking about? Buildings, equipment, money in the bank? Clause 52 provides for the vesting of property and rights to the authority on the appointed date.

We need to know what assets Experience TCI currently holds. Clause 10 requires the authority to prepare and submit annual business plans to the minister, who will take them to Cabinet, and submit an end-of-year report on the state of tourism. This bill brings accountability into effect. Mr. Speaker, we didn't have to be here.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Mr. Speaker, this has been a failed experiment. A failed experiment by the principal architect. Principal architect, are you now ready to admit that you have failed? That your way was incorrect? And that the not-so-little black boy from Bexelina was correct? At least on this one?

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Member, we've already gone down that road. Please refrain from saying that.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Okay, nobody is looking at you.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

So we all in this chamber make a contribution, and we don't look at anybody less than the other. Mr. Speaker, stop saying that, please.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

I believe, Mr. Speaker, you're talking about yourself and you're having your feelings. So I refrain from having feelings, and I cannot refer to myself. I'm not calling my name. The ordinance and the standing orders say I shouldn't refer to a member by name, so I'm referring to the member by description.

Okay, so I should say the 6'2 dark and lovely young man from Grand Turk South. Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up, over the past years, we have spent $21 million in operational costs, and the Premier says it is right. But what development have we seen from this $21 million? What product enhancement have we seen throughout the islands? They were given money to enhance tourism products. What can they show for the $21 million over the last 3 or 4 years? What tangible benefits can Experience TCI and the principal architect show for the money entrusted to them? What new products have they developed in Salt Key, Middle Caicos, North Caicos, South Caicos, Grand Turk, or Providenciales? The fund and the Ministry of Tourism have done some things, but Experience TCI have done nothing with the $21 million, at least as far as I know.

Let me say, I cannot say they have done nothing, but it appears that they have done nothing with all that money, especially in the line of development products. What new sites can tourists go to? I'm not talking about hotels or restaurants, but tourism sites. $21 million—what do we have to show for it? By their own submission, we are beginning to see a change in the model in Turks and Caicos Islands. High-end, high-value people are now choosing to go elsewhere. We have seen a drop in that niche.

If we are deciding to go away from that, let me know if that is the government mandate. Are we ensuring that South Caicos remains high-end? Does Grand Turk look like a high-end destination? $21 million of the people's money, and we still do not look like a high-end destination. We have to do more, and we entrusted them to do more, and they didn't do it. The Premier's baby has failed, and I'm happy to help him turn around and take a different course. Yes, that is what leadership is about.

We're happy that you're finally moving in this direction. And I support this direction, Mr. Speaker. I will be the first to support this bill because I believe this is the way we should have gone from before, from four years ago when we recommended. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister of Public Safety for his contribution.

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to my honourable colleagues in this House and to those in the gallery. Good afternoon to the people of these Turks and Caicos Islands. I rise this afternoon to lend my full support to this Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026. I must start where the Leader of the Opposition ended.

The Leader of the Opposition has tried to paint one of the greatest leaders and visionaries in this country over its 50 years of elected government, our Honourable Premier. He talks about the failed baby. I will say, sometimes there are miscarriages.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to my honourable colleagues in this House, to those in the gallery, and to the people of these Turks and Caicos Islands. I rise this afternoon to lend my full support to the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026. I must start where the Leader of the Opposition ended.

The Leader of the Opposition has tried to paint one of the greatest leaders and visionaries in this country over its 50 years of elected government, our Honourable Premier. He talks about the failed baby. Sometimes there are miscarriages, but we are talking about one of the most visionary leaders, former Chief Minister and current Premier, who has delivered many successful initiatives that all of us in this country benefit from today and will benefit from for years after he has left the scene. I came to express to the people of this country why, yes, we met a tourist board in total shambles.

He talks about failure. Did you know your last Minister of Tourism, where he left the tourist board when you left the scene in 2016? You know who was your Minister of Tourism? That's why something had to be done. And yes, we tried the DMO. Sometimes, when you realize there's a dead end, you have to take a new direction.

Just like this visionary gave birth to NIB, to TC Invest, to the TCI Community College, to the portfolio of religious affairs, and to taking care of the seniors of this country, I submit that the tourism authority will be added to those great legacy initiatives that this Premier and this good PNP government have added to the institution of these Turks and Caicos Islands.

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

And how could I forget the Mortgage Corporation that we delivered just yesterday. As someone who has served in the tourism sector in these Turks and Caicos Islands for some 21 years, I understand the industry and just where we are heading. He talked about the neglect of these islands. Obviously, he isn't reading the international news.

Have you not heard what's going on in North and Middle Caicos? The talk of the globe, the talk of South Caicos. You say nothing is going on? Grand Turk, the most sought-after cruise destination. Something is happening. Tourism is not simply one sector of our economy. Tourism is the engine that drives our economy. It is the foundation upon which thousands of livelihoods are built and the source of our revenue that helps fund services for our people. When tourism succeeds in these Turks and Caicos Islands, all Turks and Caicos Islanders succeed. Tourism supports jobs in our hotels and resorts, but it also supports our taxi drivers, tour operators, fishermen, farmers, restaurants, entertainers, construction workers, villa operators, small business owners, and countless families across these islands.

The revenue generated by tourism helps government invest in roads, schools, healthcare, law enforcement, social programs, community development, and the many public services our people rely upon. Simply put, a strong tourism industry creates a stronger Turks and Caicos Islands. This is why this bill is so important. We are fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful destinations in the world. Visitors continue to choose Turks and Caicos Islands in record numbers. In the first quarter of 2026 alone, we welcomed more than 203,000 stayover visitors, the highest first quarter figure in history. It wasn't a total failure.

This is the result of years of hard work, strategic investment, effective marketing, and the dedication of those who have helped build our tourism industry into what it is today. We commend the work that has been done. The Destination Management and Marketing Organization has played an important role in strengthening our destination and maintaining our position as a premier luxury destination. However, success brings new opportunities and new responsibility.

Our tourism industry of tomorrow will be larger, more competitive, and more complex than ever before. Across our islands, you will see new hotels, resorts, villas, marinas, and tourism developments being built or planned. Over the coming years, our room inventory is expected to grow significantly. That growth is exciting, but it must be managed, planned, sustainable, and must benefit our people.

This bill creates the framework to ensure exactly that. Tourism is too important to leave to chance, and the Premier and this government understand that if tourism is the engine of our economy, we must ensure that the engine is properly managed, maintained, and governed. This authority will do that. This legislation establishes the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority as a modern institution designed not only to market our destination but to shape its future.

The authority will focus on destination development, tourism research, sustainability, cruise tourism, stakeholder engagement, tourism intelligence, and long-term planning. Today's visitors are looking for much more than a beautiful beach. They want authentic experiences, to enjoy our food, to hear the Turks and Caicos story, to meet our people, and to experience what makes Turks and Caicos unique. That means investing in heritage tourism, cultural tourism, community tourism, environmental protection, festivals, attractions, and experiences that showcase the very best of who we are.

This bill is also about ensuring that every island benefits from our tourism growth. Providenciales will continue to be our primary tourism hub, but Grand Turk, Salt Cay, North Caicos, Middle Caicos, and South Caicos each offer unique experiences that visitors increasingly want to explore. The future of tourism in these Turks and Caicos Islands must create opportunities throughout the entire country. Tourism growth should not be concentrated in one area alone.

Tourism growth should create opportunities for every community and island. At the heart of this legislation is a simple principle: tourism must work for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. Tourism cannot simply happen around our people; it must happen for our people. It must create jobs, businesses, and opportunity for young people.

It must support our families, strengthen our community, and improve the quality of life for all Turks and Caicos Islanders. This bill also strengthens governance, accountability, and transparency. As our government continues to invest sustainable public resources into tourism development, destination management, tourism intelligence, sustainability initiatives, and economic inclusion programs, there must be clear oversight and measurable results. This authority will do that.

The people of this country deserve to know that their money is being invested wisely and effectively. This legislation establishes the safeguards necessary to ensure accountability while maintaining strong private sector participation and expertise. This bill is ultimately about preparing our country for the future. It is about ensuring that as tourism grows, opportunity grows.

As visitors' arrivals increase, prosperity will increase. As investment expands, benefits will reach more of our people.

And as our industry evolves, we remain the premier tourism destination in the Caribbean. Tourism is everybody's business because tourism benefits everybody. It fuels our economy, supports our public services, creates opportunity for our people, and helps secure the future of these beautiful islands we call home. If tourism is this important to our country, and it is, then we have a responsibility to get it right. That's what a good government does. You try something and it doesn't work, you make a turn and take a new direction.

And the tourism authority being established here today is the right direction, and all the people of this country will benefit. This bill helps us to do exactly that. I am proud.

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

To stand as a member of this cabinet and this government and support this Tourism Authority Bill 2026. May God continue to bless our visionary leader, may God continue to bless you, Mr. Speaker, and may God continue to bless these Turks and Caicos Islands. I thank you.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister of PPID for his contribution.

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Turks and Caicos. Good morning, my colleagues, and the people in the gallery. Good morning, Middle and North Caicos. I rise today with conviction because the question before us is not a small one. It is not a question of paperwork or procedure. It's a question of whether the Turks and Caicos Islands will seize control of our own destiny or continue to leave our greatest national asset to chance. Tourism is not just an industry to us.

It is the bread on our tables, the roofs over our heads, the future of our children. It is the proudest expression of who we are as a people. This is precisely why the machinery driving this engine cannot be fragmented, divided, and starved of the focused leadership it so desperately deserves.

Let us be honest about how we arrived here. For years, those who once sat in the seat of government had every opportunity to build something lasting, and they built nothing. They had the chance to test ideas, to learn, to adapt, to refine, to push forward through effort and experience. But you cannot learn from action you never take.

You cannot improve on a road you never dare to walk. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition speaks now of caution and concern, but how would he know the value of learning by doing when his party record is a memento to doing nothing at all? But I forgive him, Mr. Speaker, because he's my very good friend. He himself said that he liked tourism, he wanted to be the Minister for Tourism, and I believe him. I believe he would have done a better job when they were there.

But this side of the House does not fear bold action. We embrace it because progress is never handed to a people on a silver platter. It is earned through effort and through the hard-won wisdom that comes only to those willing to act, and we are acting. Just to answer a few questions that the Leader of the Opposition asked earlier: he spoke about North and Middle Caicos and what the DMO has done for North Caicos.

The first time—

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Turks and Caicos. Good morning, my colleagues, the wonderful people in the gallery. Good morning, Middle and North Caicos. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with conviction because the question before us, before this Parliament, is not a small one. It is not a question of paperwork or procedure. It's a question of whether the Turks and Caicos Islands will seize control of our own destiny or continue to leave our greatest national asset to chance. Mr. Speaker, tourism is not just an industry to us.

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I forgive him, Mr. Speaker, because he himself said that he liked tourism, he wanted to be the Minister for Tourism, and I believe him. I believe he would have done a better job when they were there, Mr. Speaker. But this side of the House does not fear bold action, Mr. Speaker. We embrace it because progress is never handed to a people on a silver platter.

It is earned through effort and yes, through the hard-won wisdom that comes only to those willing to act, and we are acting. So just to answer a few questions that the Leader of the Opposition asked earlier. He spoke about North and Middle Caicos and what the DMO has done for North Caicos. Mr. Speaker, the first time in history, there is a tourism office in

North and Middle Caicos. First time, and it's manned by people from there. Mr. Speaker, the DMO did that.

Mr. Speaker, they erected numerous visitor signs across all islands in North and Middle Caicos. They erected signs and trail signs and crossing place. Mr. Speaker, you know what crossing place is? A very good monument in North Caicos. People go there to watch the water come out of the hole.

Tourists go there now, Mr. Speaker. We worked with the Turks and Caicos National Trust to enhance visitor experience at all trust sites in North and Middle Caicos. The DMO did that. We created exploration maps to encourage more visitors to visit unbeaten paths in North and Middle Caicos, including small mama-and-papa restaurants.

Mr. Speaker, you know North Caicos is big but yet small. Mr. Speaker, the one or two people we had there couldn't sustain our economy. From the DMO time, I think we have the PS here, their numbers have increased to 2.5% going to North and Middle Caicos, or maybe more.

Because of the maps, Mr. Speaker, we were able to convince and market for more tourism to visit North and Middle Caicos, South Caicos, even Grand Turk, Mr. Speaker, because they feel comfortable to now rent a car and go to these visitor sites in North and Middle Caicos. Mr. Speaker, the car rental can tell you. Matter of fact, I'm getting beat up even though I had nothing to do with it because another car rental has gone there because there wasn't enough cars. Mr. Speaker, this is a great reason for the DMO, right? We have competed against the world with one hand tied behind our backs, Mr. Speaker, and still, still we have shown image, then what we will achieve when we are finally unleashed.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, unleashes us. It establishes a single dedicated powerful authority empowered to act, accountable to deliver, and built to win. It replaces fragmentation with focus. It replaces guesswork with hard evidence. It replaces hesitation with bold and deliberate strategy. Hear what this bill delivers for our people, Mr. Speaker: professional governance, strategic marketing, quality compliance, data-driven decision, inclusive partnership. Mr. Speaker, this is not a hollow institution. This bill builds a leadership team of real strength and clear purpose.

This, Mr. Speaker, is discipline. This is a purpose. This is governance built to perform, not for theoretics, but performance that is strategic, that is measurable, and yields. And let no one in this chamber doubt our commitment to accountability. The funds of this authority are public funds appropriated by this very Parliament. Its accounts and audits will answer the Public Finance Management Act, held to the same exact standards we deem of every statutory body. There will be transparency, there will be oversight, there will be answers to the people and to no one else. And to those who now suddenly discover their fear of disruption, let me put your mind at ease.

This transition has been crafted with care. Legal continuity is guaranteed here. The new authority will succeed this existing organization. Mr. Speaker, every asset, every right, every racket will be ours automatically and without loss. We are not tearing down what we have built. We are redeveloping. We care, and with foresight. We owe this to the generation who built this nation, Mr. Speaker, with sweat and sacrifice.

And we owe it even more to the generations not yet born. We will inherit whatever we choose to leave them. So let us choose greatness. Let us choose ambition. Let us choose to do exactly what we have been elected to do. Mr. Speaker, I was almost hesitant to say, let us choose progress, but I know the people next door had that last week. So I call on every member of this government, of this Parliament, to stand on the right side of history.

Pass this bill. And I know the Leader of the Opposition said he supported it. I mean, he couldn't stress that enough. And I thank him for his support on behalf of the Premier. But let's put the bickering aside and let's dive into this. Let us move to the world that Turks and Caicos Islands will settle for nothing less than the very best. Mr. Speaker, I do thank you. The people of North and Middle Caicos thank you.

Goodbye.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Member for Gran Turk North.

Hon. Otis Chuck Morris:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Honourable Members. Good afternoon to the beautiful people of Electoral District 1. Excuse me, my throat is a bit sore. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon in strong support of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026, a landmark piece of legislation that seeks to establish a statutory body responsible for marketing, promotion, and strategic development of tourism in our beloved Turks and Caicos Islands. Tourism remains the lifeblood of our economy. It is the engine that drives investment, creates employment, supports small businesses, and generates opportunities for thousands of our people. Therefore, it is only fitting that we continue to strengthen the structures that govern and promote this critical sector.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill represents a progressive step forward by establishing the Tourism Authority and transitioning from the current Destination Marketing and Management Organization, we are creating a more streamlined, accountable, data-driven, and efficient framework to guide the future growth of tourism in our country. The objective is clear: to position the Turks and Caicos Islands as a more premier tourism destination while ensuring that the benefits of that success are felt throughout our islands and among our people. Tourism growth must not merely be measured by visitors arriving and hotel occupancy rates. It must also be measured by how many Turks and Caicos Islanders are advancing, how many local businesses are thriving, and how many families are experiencing

improved quality of life.

As representatives of the people, we must ensure that our citizens grow with the growth of the tourism industry. The prosperity generated by this sector must create opportunities for entrepreneurs, taxi operators, tour guides, artisans, fishermen, hospitality workers, and young people aspiring to build careers within this industry. Mr. Speaker, effective planning requires reliable information. This new authority will allow us to make more informed decisions through research, statistics, and data-driven strategies that will better position our nation in an increasingly competitive global tourism market.

For scripture reminds us in Proverbs 15:22, without counsel purposes are disappointed, but in the multitude of counselors they are established. This bill embodies that principle by creating a structure through which sound planning, accountability, and strategic leadership can guide the future of our tourism sector. Mr. Speaker, likewise, Deuteronomy 8:18 reminds us, but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth the power to get wealth. As we seek greater economic development through tourism, we must never, Mr. Speaker, forget that God has blessed us.

God has blessed these islands with extraordinary beauty and opportunities. It is our responsibility to steward these blessings wisely for the benefit of present and future generations. Mr. Speaker, our beloved Beautiful by Nature brand is recognized throughout the world. With this legislation, this legislation strengthens our ability to protect, promote, and enhance that brand while ensuring that tourism remains a catalyst for sustainable economic growth and national development.

Therefore, on behalf of the people of Electoral District 1, the people of Grand Turk, Salt Cay, and the wider Turks and Caicos Islands, I wholeheartedly support the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026. I believe it is a necessary and forward-thinking investment in the future prosperity of our nation and our people. Mr. Speaker, may God continue to bless our tourism industry, and may God continue to bless these beautiful-by-nature Turks and Caicos Islands. I thank you.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution to this debate. Are there any further contributions? Are there any further— The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister of Education. For her contribution.

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Mr. Speaker, a pleasant good afternoon to you as well as my team members here present, including those in the gallery. Mr. Speaker, I had to just use my skills and make some adjustments to my presentation today after hearing that on the other side. So, Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Act.

Mr. Speaker, an act that strengthens the very backbone of our economy and places our people at the center of a more modern, more accountable, and more competitive tourism sector. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had the audacity to bang on the table and ask what has happened during the DDMO. Mr. Speaker, he was out of his place. Because he knows the answers.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I quickly Googled some of the answers because it's there. Mr. Speaker, how dare he try to disregard the efforts of the Honourable Premier as well as the efforts of the former Minister of Tourism who presented that bill in this House. So, Mr. Speaker, allow me to go taking down memory lane.

The Turks and Caicos Islands have continued to rank among the Caribbean's most desirable luxury and beach destinations in major travel publications and reader surveys during 2022 to the 2025 period. Mr. Speaker, isn't that progress, consistency in our efforts? Mr. Speaker, under experienced Turks and Caicos destination promotion efforts, the country has emphasized its multi-island destination strategy, highlighting North and Middle Caicos, South Caicos, and Grand Turk, rather than solely focusing on Providenciales. And our minister with responsibilities for North Caicos spoke to that. There are bodies in those islands with a mandate.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most notable awards earned during Experience TCI era was Caribbean Best Incentive Destination World MICE Awards 2024, won by Providenciales for the 2nd consecutive year. Experienced Turks and Caicos publicly highlighted this achievement as evidence of the destination's strength in meetings, initiatives, conferences, and events tourism. But you know, Mr. Speaker, let me go down to

South Caicos because the Leader of the Opposition will say that we are only focusing on Provo. Take you down memory lane, the place where I was born, Isaba. South Caicos has increasingly been recognized as an emerging luxury and sustainable tourism destination. Mr. Speaker, travel media in 2025 describes South Caicos as one of the Caribbean's rising luxury destinations, citing conservation initiatives, authentic local culture, world-class diving and lower visitor density than Providenciales.

And you have the audacity to ask, what did the DMV do? The evidence is there. Mr. Speaker, Sail Rock Resort continues to maintain exceptionally strong guest ratings and holds TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice recognition, placing it among highly rated resorts in the destination. Mr. Speaker, our Premier knew what he was doing. He knew, and the evidence is there, isn't it, Mr. Leader of the Opposition? Remember now, you posed that question.

I wasn't coming prepared to remind the public of this, but we have to answer your questions. Mr. Speaker, may I say, South Caicos, we have completed projects to enhance the experience, and it includes the installation of the South Caicos landmark sign, the installation of bird watching signage and beaches, enhancement work to the boiling hole including the installation of interpretive signage, constructed and installation of windmill replicas overlooking the salt ponds, hosting of a product development workshop for tourism stakeholders as

part of destination development efforts. And Mr. Speaker, the audacity to say when I walk around I don't see any improvement—pack your bags tomorrow, take a trip around the Turks and Caicos, see it with your own eyes.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make mention that for Salt Cay, we have completed projects including the enhancement of North Beach, the development of North Beach Trail, installation of Salt Cay landmark sign. I hope the people in Salt Cay didn't hear your presentation today because you gave the impression that this good government is doing nothing to enhance the experience of Turks and Caicos Islands. Mr. Speaker, since operational in 2023, Experience Turks and Caicos Islands has done a very good job. It has promoted a multi-tourism strategy, and it emphasized culture, history, local cuisine, sustainability, and community-based focus. Now, Mr. Speaker, before I dive into my speech, I am beginning to reminisce over a WhatsApp message I received.

And as I start to share and forward it, I wasn't able to do it too much because it's been forwarded so many times. Mr. Speaker, the 2026 hot list—new best hotels in the world. Drum roll, Mr. Speaker. Turks and Caicos and the Dominican Republic are the only Caribbean countries mentioned in the Caribbean. So, Mr. Speaker, that's what was happening with the DMMO money.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY ACT - SECOND READING

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Mr. Speaker, a pleasant good afternoon to you as well as my team members here present, including those in the gallery. I rise in strong support of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Act, an act that strengthens the backbone of our economy and places our people at the center of a more modern, accountable, and competitive tourism sector. The Leader of the Opposition questioned what has happened during the DDMO. He knows the answers.

The Turks and Caicos Islands have continued to rank among the Caribbean's most desirable luxury and beach destinations in major travel publications and reader surveys during the 2022 to 2025 period. Under experienced Turks and Caicos destination promotion efforts, the country has emphasized its multi-island destination strategy, highlighting North and Middle Caicos, South Caicos, and Grand Turk, rather than solely focusing on Providenciales. One of the most notable awards earned during Experience TCI era was Caribbean Best Incentive Destination World MICE Awards 2024, won by Providenciales for the second consecutive year. South Caicos has increasingly been recognized as an emerging luxury and sustainable tourism destination, with travel media in 2025 describing it as one of the Caribbean's rising luxury destinations.

Sail Rock Resort maintains strong guest ratings and holds TripAdvisor Travelist choice recognition. Our Premier knew what he was doing. For Salt Cay, we have completed projects including the enhancement of North Beach, the development of North Beach Trail, and installation of Salt Cay landmark sign. Since operational in 2023, Experience Turks and Caicos Islands has promoted a multi-tourism strategy emphasizing culture, history, local cuisine, sustainability, and community-based focus.

The 2026 hot list of new best hotels in the world includes Turks and Caicos and the Dominican Republic as the only Caribbean countries mentioned. That's what was happening with the DMMO money.

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

What did you say? Money.

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Money. I'm getting to your point right now. He's asking why close it down because it's doing so good. If it was doing so good, my speech will address that. Before the development of the DMMO, we never had any promotions on those islands. Not much promotions on those islands, but now we are getting accolades for Bambara Beach.

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

That's right.

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

He surely does not understand what true progress looks like. I also want to address something that was said on the other side. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition was attempting to present four years of tourism operations as though they were simply the cost of creating an organization. They were not. The funds spent over that period paid for destination marketing, international promotion, airline partnerships, trade engagement, public relations, research, staffing, market development, and the day-to-day work of ensuring that the Turks and Caicos Islands remain one of the most sought-after destinations in the region. That is how that big amount was spent.

Had the tourist board remained in place, those same operation expenses would have still existed. Tourism promotion is not free. Attracting visitors is not free. Maintaining airlift is not free. What is before this House today is not an admission that tourism marketing failed. In fact, tourism continued to grow, visitor arrivals increased, new airline opportunities emerged, and the industry remained the backbone of the economy. But this bill recognizes that institutions must evolve. Experience has shown that certain aspects of the DMO model did not function as intended within the Turks and Caicos context.

Rather than stubbornly defend a structure because it exists,

this government is prepared to improve it. The real question is simple: when experience reveals a better path, should government do nothing or should government act? This bill is government acting. It takes lessons learned over the past several years and creates a strong governance framework, clearer accountability, improved financial oversight, and a modern tourism authority capable of leading the industry into the future. With all the successes we have, because we are such a progressive government, we want to see even more for the Turks and Caicos Islands, remembering that tourism is our number one industry.

If the opposition agrees with the substance of the bill, as has been suggested, then what we are debating is not the destination but the timing. There is never a wrong time to improve governance, strengthen accountability, and better position the country's most important industry for long-term success. This Government is making quality assurance a national mandate, not just in tourism, but across ministries and sectors. Recently, Cabinet approved the National Quality Assurance Policy under the remit of the Premier.

When people come to the Turks and Caicos Islands, it is the quality of their experience that matters. A landmark framework that sets standards for service delivery, regulatory compliance, and performance across government, and that is the reason why the Ministry of Tourism acted. This act aligns perfectly with that policy. The creation of a Chief Operating Officer for Quality Assurance and Tourism Intelligence, supported by a dedicated department, ensures that quality is not an afterthought but is embedded in every aspect of our tourism product.

Quality assurance is not replacing tourism regulations. Tourism regulations remain the regulator under government. The Authority's quality assurance function is more about standards, visitor experience, destination competitiveness, and continuous improvement rather than enforcement. Countries like New Zealand, Singapore, and Costa Rica have used national quality frameworks to elevate their tourism industries to world-class status.

We are now taking that same step. It is important to understand that there are mechanisms we have to put in place to address where we are and prepare us for where we intend to go. Each of the roles highlighted in the bill are critical and provide specialized oversight in areas that directly influence our competitiveness. The Chief Marketing and Sales used to be just marketing, but sales is a very important component because brand awareness is a big part of the new body's responsibilities.

Sales was added to marketing because marketing creates awareness; sales converts awareness into bookings, partnerships, airlift, trade relations, and visitor arrivals. The ministry wanted both functions working together under one executive. We have to always be presented as a high destination, marketing to keep Turks and Caicos visible in a crowded global market. I want to end my speech because I did take a lot of time to remind him about what we have been experiencing under the DDMO.

This bill is not about creating another government body. It is about creating a modern tourism authority capable of protecting and growing the most important industry in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Tourism is more competitive than ever. Destinations that invest in data, quality, sales, airlift, sustainability, and product development will succeed.

I want you to reflect on two critical terminologies: data-driven and quality assurance. That is why, in my view, this is the strongest strategic defense of this bill, taking into consideration quality assurance and being very data-driven. This bill reflects a government that listens, learns, and leads. A government that is not afraid to evolve.

I am so happy that under the Ministry of Tourism they weren't afraid to say, DDMO did what it was supposed to do, but to take tourism product further, we have to shift our focus. I am proud of the Ministry of Tourism for taking that bold step. I fully support this bill because it positions the Turks and Caicos Islands to compete, to grow, and to prosper. It ensures that our number one industry remains strong, resilient, and beneficial to all. With that being said, I strongly support the bill.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HOUSE SUSPENSION FOR MIDDAY BREAK

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Honourable Members, we have just now passed the 1 PM hour, and this is the time now that we'll take our midday break. This Honourable House is hereby suspended until 2 PM.

RESUMPTION OF TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING DEBATE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable members, this Honourable House now resumes its sitting. Pray be seated. Honourable Members, before we went on our break, we were debating the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026, and the floor is now open again for debate. Are there any contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable 7th All-Island Member for her contribution.

Put your mic on for me, please.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - SECOND READING DEBATE

Hon. Josephine Olivia Conolly:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you for

recognizing me. I rise to give my contribution to the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority. Before I do so, I want to say that I am an all-island candidate, and I've been a member of this Parliament for—this is my fourth term.

I've supported my people before I came here, and I will continue to do so. I worked very hard and was successful before I came here, and everything I built is still intact over the last 30 years. I am not ashamed of my success. No Turks and Caicos Islander should be ashamed of their success, and no Turks and Caicos Islander should be criticized for being successful. I thank God every night for his blessings, and every time the opportunity presents itself to bless someone, I do it without hesitation.

I thought I should say that. Now the bill. The Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority will now become a statutory body. When I read the bill, the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority might be better described as Tourist Board Mark II. That being the case, it would have been instructive to have the final accounts of Tourist Board Mark I laid before this Honourable House. I think the public would be surprised by the amount of unexplainable expenditure and the extraordinary lack of oversight over a long period of time by both the boards and the various ministers. Not really a good introduction to Tourist Board Mark II, which perhaps explains its absence. The Tourist Board Number 1 has not had an audit for over six years.

I think the people of this country would appreciate some transparency and accountability during those times. I stood on many a stage next to the Premier during the 2021 election campaign, and we lauded the advantages of a DMMO. It was to be a new start for our tourism industry. I believed that then, and I have not changed my mind.

We are going backward, back to a failed institution. The overarching rule of the DMMO was a structure where neither the public nor private sector can unilaterally dominate tourism policy. It was a partnership. It was forward-looking and a direction that other Caribbean islands were following. This new bill moves us back to a place where we have been before. Going back is going to cost the people of these islands. We have not yet wound up the tourist board, Mark I. To add to this, we will have the cost of winding up the DMMO, and of course, the cost of setting up Tourist Board Mark II.

Can we afford these U-turns? This is going to be one expensive exercise. Section 11 identifies the seven members of the board. This includes the president of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourist Association, and six members chosen by the minister. The minister can pick, choose, or refuse. The main reason for this bill seems to be to break up the public-private partnership and put the power firmly back in the hands of the minister. As seems to be the case in the other new bills with no input from the Leader of the Opposition on the appointment of directors. Section 27 references the Chief Executive Officer and states that they are appointed by the minister on the recommendation of the board. However, it does not address the circumstance when the minister does not agree with the recommendation.

I wish he was here today. This seems entirely redundant. As I said yesterday, if a competent professional board searches, interviews, and identifies a suitable candidate, why is political input from the minister necessary? There's a well-known saying: power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. There is no reason for this power grab.

Diversity of opinion should be championed, not seen as a threat. I'm calling on the Auditor General to look into the accounts of the Tourist Board. And I'm asking you, Mr. Speaker, to please request the audit reports of the Tourist Board in this Honourable House so we can have a better understanding of what went on.

I thank you very much for your time, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL DEBATE

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Grateful, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues. Good afternoon, strangers in the gallery. Good afternoon to the amazing people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and especially to Leeward and Long Bay. Mr. Speaker, I stand to lend Leeward and Long Bay's support to the Tourism Authority Bill before us today. Colleagues have gone through the history of how we got here, including the Leader of the Opposition, who omitted that he sued you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing the Destination Management Organization legislation to pass and lost in court. The court reminded the Leader of the Opposition and his then colleague that the authority for developing, passing, and vetting legislation is vested in Parliament. For legislation to come forward, the executive must make a policy decision and instruct the Attorney General's Chambers to draft it.

I only joined the executive 32 days ago, so the development of this authority was already in progress. My background is employment law, and reviewing the bill, I am assured that employees will be treated in accordance with the employment ordinance. We must accept that the tourist board was no longer fit for purpose. As the last chairman of the Public Accounts Committee before the Leader of the Opposition, we laid our report based on a decade of tourist board accounts. We nearly had to send for the then Minister of Tourism, who was also the director of the tourist board, because he refused to appear before the committee.

That is the power the current Leader of the Opposition had then and now. If he was so invested in understanding the accounts, he had the authority and power at that time. It's easy to come here years later, having failed in your responsibility as chair of the Public Accounts Committee, and criticize. The DMMO was an evolution of the tourist board. I

supported it, attended stakeholder engagements, and lent my support to it. If industry and government work together to market and manage the destination, it's a win-win.

Over time, we must evolve. The DMMO took us so far, as did the tourist board. The Department of Tourism Regulations was a result of the transition from the Tourist Board to the DMMO, creating a public department with new jobs and clear guidelines, ensuring tourism products are properly licensed. This benefits TCIG by ensuring government oversight of the tourism sector. The tourist board was always playing catch-up to the private sector. The DMO served its time, and we received accolades, but government oversight is essential for taxpayer money.

The DMO worked for its time, but the new authority is a better way forward. Ministerial oversight of statutory bodies is standard, as with TCIAA, NHIB, Port Authority, and TCICC. The administration's will must be articulated to statutory bodies, and the board ensures cabinet policy decisions are carried out. Ministerial appointments, as raised in Section 27, are no different than other statutory bodies and allow cabinet to review and discuss appointments.

The bill is not trying to erase the past. If I took a shot every time the Leader of the Opposition said 'fail,' I'd have to be rolled out of here. You must take risks to build and be bold enough to try new things. The DMMO is not a failure, but it needs to evolve with an integrated public service approach.

I hope to speak about other industries as important as tourism in the future. The Tourism Authority is an evolution, not a step backward. We've tried the tourist board and the DMMO; now we move to a tourism authority with strong private sector engagement. The board includes the president of the Turks and Caicos Islands Hotel Association and five private sector members whose resumes must be vetted.

The board's membership must fit categories such as tourism, hospitality, hotel operations, aviation, attractions, marine tourism, transportation, SME development, cultural tourism, finance, marketing, business operations, and community engagement. This breadth allows the board to adapt to the destination's needs. The ordinance provides a clear mandate for the board based on cabinet policy, with funding shown in the budget book. Parliament and its committees have oversight.

Change is hard but necessary. This institution will provide a clear mandate for public and private sectors to market and manage our destination. I lend Leeward and Long Bay's support to this bill and remind colleagues that the employment ordinance requires two or more years of employment for severance if a position is made redundant. The organization being wound up is still young, so the costs are not as high as suggested.

Thank you.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - SECOND READING DEBATE

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Good afternoon, colleagues, strangers in the gallery, and the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, especially Leeward and Long Bay. I stand to lend Leeward and Long Bay's support to the Tourism Authority Bill before us today. Colleagues have discussed the history of how we arrived here. The Leader of the Opposition omitted that he sued you, Mr. Speaker, over the Destination Management Organization legislation and lost, as the court reminded him that developing and passing legislation is vested in Parliament, following a policy decision by the executive and drafting by the Attorney General's Chambers.

I joined the executive only 32 days ago, so this authority was in development before my time. My background is employment law, and reviewing the bill, I am assured employees will be treated according to the employment ordinance. We must accept that the tourist board was no longer fit for purpose. As the last chairman of the Public Accounts Committee before the Leader of the Opposition took over, we laid a report on a decade of tourist board accounts. If the Leader of the Opposition was so invested in understanding the accounts, he had the authority and power to do so as chair.

It's easy to criticize years later after failing in that responsibility. The DMMO was an evolution of the tourist board. I supported the concept and attended stakeholder engagements. If the industry and government join to market and manage the destination, it's a win-win. The DMMO took us so far, with work done in the islands outside Providenciales.

Now, we're taking it to another level. The Department of Tourism Regulations was created during the transition from the Tourist Board to the DMMO, establishing a public department with new jobs and clear guidelines, ensuring tourism products are properly licensed. This benefits TCIG by steering the tourism sector, rather than playing catch-up to the private sector as before. The tourist board and DMMO served their time, but now we have found a better way through this legislation.

Ministerial oversight of statutory bodies is standard, as with TCIAA, NHIB, Port Authority, and TCICC. The administration's will should be articulated to statutory bodies, with day-to-day operations managed by the authority and the board ensuring cabinet policy decisions are carried out. The appointment of board members and CEO by the minister in cabinet ensures collective cabinet input. The bill is not erasing the past; it's an evolution.

You have to take risks to build and not remain in the status quo. The DMMO is not a failure, but needs to evolve with an integrated public service approach. I hope to see another industry become as important as tourism in the future. The Tourism Authority is not a step backward, but progress.

The board's makeup ensures private sector engagement, with required experience in tourism, hospitality, hotel operations, aviation, attractions, marine tourism, ground transportation, SME development, cultural tourism, finance, marketing,

business operations, and community engagement. The bill provides breadth for the board's mandate, based on cabinet policy and funded as a statutory body. Oversight is provided by Parliament and its committees. Change is hard but necessary.

This institution will provide a clear mandate for public and private sectors to market and manage our destination. I lend Leeward and Long Bay's support to this bill. The employment ordinance requires two or more years of employment for severance if made redundant; the organization being wound up is still young, so the cost is not as high as suggested.

Thank you.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? There being no further contributions, I call on the Honourable Premier to wrap up the debate and commit the bill to the Committee of the Whole.

DEBATE ON DESTINATION MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING ORGANIZATION BILL - PREMIER'S WRAP-UP AND RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've made some notes here to rebut. I think I may have to use this. No, don't worry about it. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be very brief because our members have had two busy days and there's an extremely busy remainder of the week.

I will want to speak to a couple of points that were made by the Leader of the Opposition and the former Minister for Tourism, but before I do, I would like to thank her for her service. In the years that she was responsible for managing the tourism portfolio for Turks and Caicos. Anything that I may have said in my introduction or my opening this morning is not meant to be a reflection on any individual in this room. I think it's important that we do what is best for Turks and Caicos, and I truly believe, as I did in 2022, that the DMO is the best thing for tourism in these Turks and Caicos Islands. I must, however, take exception to the referral of this retooling, restructuring of the organization as Tourist Board 2.0.

That is not the case, and I am surprised that that was said coming from the Minister who was indeed the previous, the most recent Minister for Tourism under whose direction the tourism industry and the TCI fell from 2022 to 2025, that's over a period of three years. If this bill was properly reviewed by the Minister, she would know that the contents of this bill were almost verbatim lifted from two documents: one was the Articles of Association of the DMMO and the bylaws. So in terms of the content and the structure and the intention of the bill of the new organization, it remains the same in intent and almost the same in operation.

Now, I will be the first one to say, because I struggled with the idea, and I was fully aware of the disalignment with the Public Finance Management Act and the PPO at the time, I was hoping that we could still find a way to make that work. And that was one of the reasons why the destination enhancement fee was introduced, because the intention in my mind at the time was that the destination enhancement fee could be directly applied to the new DMMO without actually going through the budget process, and so making them more or less independent.

So the current accountability framework and the decision rights under which the DMMO operates is not of my making. It is what the laws of this country are, and until we have the flexibility, until we change it, that's what we are obliged to follow. I would have loved for the tourism sector to have the autonomy so that they wouldn't have to operate under the strict public procurement ordinance and the public finance management ordinance as a department of government has to.

Because initially, the fact that the $10 per ticket was put in place was to try to operate outside of that system. I believe that a lot of what we do, accountability can be done through post-audit functions, but we share responsibility with the United Kingdom and the set of rules in place have worked, and in some ways it's wound too tight. But that was the rationale for setting it up in the first place, being a network organization, a social partnership between the government and the private sector. That social partnership remains still today, except now the accountability framework is different.

This whole exercise is meant to fit the operation into the current accountability framework because it became very awkward in order to deliver for tourism and TCI, given the fact that we could not work within the loose framework that was in place. There were some specific accusations that the Minister controls everything, more or less. Let me say, ministerial appointments and policy directions are standard in statutory bodies across the Commonwealth systems.

The authority retains a board, an executive team, and defined corporate responsibilities. And I think everybody in this room knows that the minister means the cabinet. If we're going to elect a cabinet and say that the minister or the cabinet can't be responsible to make decisions, then we are not progressive. We can't say that we want more autonomy and then, when we get the autonomy and allocate it to ministers in Cabinet, we complain.

This is not control. It is democratic accountability because that is why ministers are elected. To say that it is Tourist Board 2.0, suggesting or specifically alluding to a loss of private sector control, let me say this: tourism is a national industry, not a private entity. The new model broadens participation beyond a limited membership structure and formalizes engagement. The whole idea was to have stakeholders around the table to create stakeholder synergy. It didn't just include hotel owners. It was supposed to mean the water sports people, the taxi operators, all these people need to have a seat at the table, and that was the original idea, and that is still the idea today.

Tourism must serve the country, not just a membership group. The structure reflects modern tourism management needs: marketing, data, cruise development. It replaces fragmentation with coordinated capability. This is not bureaucracy. It is capacity to compete. We have come a long way from the Tourist Board 1.0, because Experience TCI has done a lot. We now have a position for a director of cruise tourism, and cruise tourism is going to be becoming more important, particularly for the island of Grand Turk.

We do need someone stationed here, who's qualified, and whose eyes are constantly on monitoring the cruise industry in these islands. Modern destination management requires integrated function. We have to think about investment, sustainability, community product development, and the Minister for PPID outlined a whole list of product development that is taking place under the DMMO, and those will continue. The whole reason why we had the Sustainability Fund was because the money that is not spent on marketing and destination management will go towards managing the whole destination, including putting in place attractions and activities for tourists to enjoy.

That is the one thing that's lacking in this country. This is a beautiful country, and it's all God-given attributes. But if we are going to compete, we also have to have attractions and activities, particularly if we get back to a space where we have downtime periods. The Minister's direct authority— the Minister can direct the authority, strategic direction ensures alignment with national policy.

Without it, the authority risks operating without democratic mandate. That direction by the Ministry is through the Cabinet. Direction ensures alignment; it does not eliminate governance. The idea that the government has now seized the DMO and diluted it by making it— by suggesting that it's gone back to the tourist board.

In fact, what has happened is a restructuring of a national function, not a confiscation. The players remain the same. Tourism branding and asset must align with national accountability and strategy. This is not a takeover, it is a national alignment. I agree with the former minister in terms of the looseness of how tourism was managed prior to DMO, prior to Experience Turks and Caicos Islands, and that is why we cannot allow it to slip back to that. When I originally spoke to this, I referred to it as a status, meaning it is controlled by the state, and that was the whole reason why we migrated from that system. We are all aware of the opaque nature of how the tourist board was operated. It is a shame that the necessary audits to ensure accountability have not yet been done.

In migrating from one to another, whether it was from the original tourism board to the DMO, it was always understood that the closing out of the tourist board, the books would be presented to Parliament. That is still the case, that is still proper, and it is still something that we ought to insist on, on having done so everyone is clear, the country is clear, that the transition was done in the light of day and that whoever was accountable would have the record of accountability made available to the whole country.

The Minister suggested that this current reform is unnecessary and that the DMO was working. I explained that when I got up and spoke the first time, and what I said then, I say now: the DMO as it stood did not align with legislation, and that is all this is trying to do. It doesn't take power from anyone, it doesn't give it to the minister, it conforms with the law, and I didn't introduce the legislation because I don't have the power to do so by Order in Council.

That's the House of Lords. I didn't draft the bill. We establish the policy, but we do not draft bills— the bills have to be drafted by the draft persons, and they have an obligation to draft it in line with the law, and that is all that has happened. Reform is about future readiness, not correcting failure.

The global tourism landscape requires stronger coordination, data, and strategy. We are building for tomorrow, not settling for today or yesterday. This Bill replaces fragmentation with coordination. Tourism is too important to be left unaligned with national policy. Accountability is not control. It is responsibility to the people. We are modernizing governance, not politicizing it. The choice is simple: evolve or fall behind.

And we will not fall behind. I want to correct some other statements made by my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, in relationship to some of his characterization as to waste. I came out of the box this morning defensively because I anticipated that a good offense is the best defense. I anticipated, given the vitriolic process that we went through when the bill was introduced, that the Leader of the Opposition would come out in full force, so I didn't want to concede to him.

I did come out in a very offensive stance this morning. But the Leader of the Opposition, I do believe that you probably misunderstood something. When we first spoke this morning, I thought you were criticizing the cost of operationalizing the DMO. The cost of operationalizing the DMO was literally 10% of what you said it was.

It was $723,335. That was the cost of operationalizing, and I don't believe that was a waste because it is exactly what we needed in order to establish the DMO. We have been having issues in the early days in making and collecting the destination enhancement fee, and up to the end of 2025, we have collected $16 million, new money, new brand money, in place before the DMMO was established. The cost of running the organization in the last three years, based on the numbers you presented, was $21 million.

But that money was used to operate Experience TCI. It was not a waste of money. It was paid to promote the destination, pay employee salaries, support industry stakeholders, pay for office accommodation, and pay for all of those other things that my colleagues mentioned earlier today. Whether operating as a tourist board or other national tourism management model, it requires an annual operating budget.

The $15 to $21 million was the operating budget of Experience TCI over the last three years, and without that, we wouldn't have a tourism industry. Experience TCI was not perfect. We did not, and still to this day haven't been able to recruit a permanent CEO. That is something we will be putting

a lot of emphasis on going forward.

But tourism under Experience Turks and Caicos Islands performed well. The performance speaks for itself. In financial year terms, stayover arrivals increased from 582,000 in 2023 to 654,000 in 2025/26, an increase of 71,000 visitors, or 12%. In calendar year terms, arrivals rose from 556,000 visitors in 2022 to 641,000 in 2025, an increase of 85,000 visitors, or 15%. In the first four months alone of this year, performance has been even stronger. Arrivals increased from 192,000 to 268,000 in 2026, a gain of 75,000 visitors or 39%. These figures demonstrate clearly that the investment made in destination management, marketing, and industry support has delivered measurable growth in visitor arrivals.

Hon. Josephine Olivia Conolly:

Thank you.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - GENERAL DEBATE

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

In the years that she was responsible for managing the tourism portfolio for Turks and Caicos, anything I may have said in my introduction or my opening this morning is not meant to be a reflection on any individual in this room. I think it's important that we do what is best for Turks and Caicos, and I truly believe, as I did in 2022, that the DMO is the best thing for tourism in these Turks and Caicos Islands. I must, however, take exception to the referral of this retooling and restructuring as 'Tourist Board 2.0.' That is not the case, and I am surprised that was said, coming from the Minister who was indeed the previous Minister for Tourism, under whose direction the tourism industry and the TCI fell from 2022 to 2025, over a period of three years.

If this bill was properly reviewed by the Minister, she would know that the contents of this bill were almost verbatim lifted from two documents: the Articles of Association of the DMMO and the bylaws. In terms of the content, structure, and intention of the bill and the new organization, it remains the same in intent and almost the same in operation. I struggled with the idea and was fully aware of the disalignment with the Public Finance Management Act and the PPO at the time. I was hoping we could still find a way to make that work.

That was one of the reasons why the destination enhancement fee was introduced, because the intention was that the fee could be directly applied to the new DMMO without going through the budget process, making them more or less independent. The current accountability framework and the decision rights under which the DMMO operates are not of my making; it is what the laws of this country are, and until we have the flexibility or change it, that's what we are obliged to follow. I would have loved for the tourism sector to have autonomy so that they wouldn't have to operate under the strict public procurement ordinance and the public finance management ordinance as a government department has to.

Initially, the $10 per ticket was put in place to try to operate outside of that system. I believe accountability can be done through post-audit functions, but we share responsibility with the United Kingdom and the rules in place have worked, though in some ways it's wound too tight. That was the rationale for setting it up as a network organization, a social partnership between government and private sector. That social partnership remains today, except now the accountability framework is meant to fit the operation into the current framework because it became awkward to deliver for tourism and TCI given we could not work within the loose framework that was in place.

There were specific accusations that the Minister controls everything. Let me say, ministerial appointments and policy directions are standard in statutory bodies across Commonwealth systems. The authority retains a board, an executive team, and defined corporate responsibilities. The minister means the cabinet, and if we elect a cabinet and say the minister or cabinet can't be responsible to make decisions, then we are not progressive. We can't say we want more autonomy and then complain when we allocate that autonomy to ministers in Cabinet. This is not control; it is democratic accountability because that is why ministers are elected.

To say it is Tourist Board 2.0, suggesting a loss of private sector control, let me say tourism is a national industry, not a private entity. The new model broadens participation beyond a limited membership structure and formalizes engagement. The whole idea was to have stakeholders around the table to create synergy, not just hotel owners, but water sports people, taxi operators, all needing a seat at the table. Tourism must serve the country, not just a membership group. The structure reflects modern tourism management needs: marketing, data, cruise development.

It replaces fragmentation with coordinated capability. This is not bureaucracy; it is capacity to compete. We have come a long way from Tourist Board 1.0. Experience TCI has done a lot. We now have a director of cruise tourism, which is important for Grand Turk. Modern destination management requires integrated function, considering investment, sustainability, community product development, and the Minister for PPID outlined product development under the DMMO. The Sustainability Fund was created because money not spent on marketing and management will go towards managing the destination, including attractions and activities for tourists.

This country is beautiful, but to compete we must have attractions and activities, especially in downtime periods. The Minister's direct authority ensures alignment with national policy. Without it, the authority risks operating without democratic mandate. Direction by the Ministry is through Cabinet. Direction ensures alignment, not elimination of governance. The idea that government has seized the DMO and diluted it by making it the tourist board again is incorrect; this is a restructuring of a national function, not a confiscation. The players remain the same. Tourism branding and assets must align with national accountability and strategy.

This is not a takeover; it is a national alignment. I agree with the former minister about the looseness of how tourism was managed prior to the DMO, and that is why we cannot allow it to slip back. I referred to it as a status, meaning it is controlled by the state, and that was why we migrated from that system. We are aware of the opaque nature of how the tourist board was operated, and it is a shame that the necessary audits have not yet been done.

It is proper that in migrating from one to another, the closing out of the tourist board books would be presented to Parliament. That is still the case and something we ought to insist on so the country is clear the transition was done in the light of day. The Minister suggested that reform is unnecessary and that the DMO was working. When I spoke the first time, I said the DMO as it stood did not align with legislation, and that is all this is trying to do. It doesn't take power from anyone or give it to the minister; it conforms with the law. I didn't introduce the legislation because I don't have the power to do so by Order in Council; that's the House of Lords.

We establish policy, but we do not draft bills; the draft persons do, and they must do so in line with the law. Reform is about future readiness, not correcting failure. The global tourism landscape requires stronger coordination, data, and strategy. We are building for tomorrow, not settling for today or yesterday. This Bill replaces fragmentation with coordination.

Tourism is too important to be left unaligned with national policy. Accountability is not control; it is responsibility to the people. We are modernizing governance, not politicizing it. The choice is simple: evolve or fall behind, and we will not fall behind. I want to correct some other statements by the Leader of the Opposition regarding waste.

I came out defensively this morning because I anticipated a strong response given the process when the bill was introduced. The Leader of the Opposition probably misunderstood something; I thought he was criticizing the cost of operationalizing the DMO. The cost was $723,335, not the $7 million suggested. That was the consultancy cost and necessary to establish the DMO.

We had issues in the early days collecting the destination enhancement fee, and up to the end of 2025, we have collected $16 million, new money. The cost of running the organization in the last three years was $21 million, but that money was used to operate Experience TCI, not wasted. It paid for promotion, salaries, stakeholder support, office accommodation, and other expenses. Whether operating as a tourist board or another model, it requires an annual operating budget.

The $15 to $21 million was the operating budget of Experience TCI over three years, and without it, we wouldn't have a tourism industry. Experience TCI was not perfect; we still haven't recruited a permanent CEO, which we will focus on going forward. Tourism under Experience Turks and Caicos Islands performed well. Stayover arrivals increased from 582,000 in 2023 to 654,000 in 2025/26, an increase of 71,000 visitors or 12%.

In calendar year terms, arrivals rose from 556,000 in 2022 to 641,000 in 2025, an increase of 85,000 visitors or 15%. In the first four months of this year, arrivals increased from 192,000 to 268,000 in 2026, a gain of 75,000 visitors or 39%. These figures demonstrate that the investment in destination management, marketing, and industry support has delivered measurable growth in visitor arrivals.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, I do not want to belabour the point, but the truth is the DMMO was not a failure. The issue was not conceptual failure; it was institutional limitation. The DMMO strengthened marketing, improved stakeholder collaboration, and advanced destination management thinking. Constraints arose because it did not align with legislation.

We are not replacing a failed idea; we are strengthening a successful one with a proper governance framework. In the interest of time, I don't want to go over what my colleagues have already defended today, and I thank them. In closing, the issue was not performance failure; it was the absence of leadership stability.

You cannot launch a new organization and not have a captain for long. This Bill seeks to correct that. The Leader of the Opposition suggests the old Tourist Board was not broken and why fix it, or that we should just transfer everybody into the new organization. That is part of the problem, as we did not do a thorough job of vetting those transferred.

Between the DMO, Experience Turks and Caicos, and the Tourism Regulatory Authority, there has been an exponential increase in the number of Turks and Caicos Islanders employed. That is another benefit. Institutions must evolve as the economy evolves, and tourism has already moved ahead of the current structure. The Bill strengthens financial discipline, not bureaucracy.

The bill does not increase spending. The former minister suggests it will be massive spending, but last year we collected $9 million in the Destination Enhancement Fund, which will pay for national tourism management and promotion. The DMO was set up to invest more in tourism, as cutting the tourism budget in difficult times is not the answer. The bill ensures continuity; assets, contracts, and obligations automatically transfer, and the Authority becomes the legal successor.

Branding and operations continue uninterrupted. This is a transition in law, not a disruption in operations. This is not a reversal of policy; the policy continues, not reversed. Same DMO concept, same strategic direction, stronger institutional framework. Reform is the next phase of maturation. This is not a policy reversal; it is the completion of the policy. The Bill preserves the DMO model, strengthens governance, clarifies decision rights, aligns with PFM accountability, institutionalizes

tourism intelligence, ensures leadership continuity, and protects public funds. The concept remains, governance improves, and accountability meets public standards.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I would now like to commit this bill to a Committee of the Whole. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, I move that the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 be referred to a committee of the whole House. Do I have a seconder?

FIRST READING OF BILLS

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, I do not want to belabour the point, but the truth of the matter is the DMMO was not a failure. The issue was not conceptual failure; it was institutional limitation. The DMMO strengthened marketing, improved stakeholder collaboration, and advanced destination management thinking. Constraints arose because it did not align with the legislation.

We are not replacing a failed idea; we are strengthening a successful one with a proper governance framework. In the interest of time, I do not want to go over because my colleagues did an excellent job today in defending this bill in their presentation, and I thank them. Let me say in closing, the issue was not performance failure.

It was the absence, to some extent, of leadership stability. You cannot launch a new organization and then not have a captain, and certainly not have it for long. This Bill, in addition to everything else, seeks to correct that. The Leader of the Opposition suggests that the old Tourist Board was not broken and asked why fix it.

He also suggested that if we were going to fix it, we should just transfer everybody into the new organization. That is exactly what the public believes is part of the problem with the new one, because we did not do a thorough job of vetting those persons who were transferred. What is also important, between the DMO, Experience Turks and Caicos, and the Tourism Regulatory Authority, there has been an exponential increase in the number of Turks and Caicos Islanders who have been employed. That is another benefit of what we have done.

Institutions must evolve as the economy evolves, and tourism has already moved ahead of the current structure. The Bill strengthens financial discipline and not bureaucracy. The bill does not increase spending. The former minister suggests that it is going to be massive spending to do this. It will not be. In fact, the last collection was $9 million collected last year in the Destination Enhancement Fund. The Destination Enhancement Fund will single-handedly pay for the management of tourism, including promotion. $9 million in one year, up from just over $1 million the first year.

The whole idea for setting up the DMO is to be able to invest more in tourism, because in the past, when times were difficult, the tourism budget was cut like everything else. In a tourism-driven economy, you should not be cutting the tourism budget; maybe that is the time when it ought to be increased. It is important to realize who is paying the bill and where the money is coming from. The bill ensures full continuity.

Assets, contracts, and obligations automatically transfer. The Authority becomes the legal successor. Branding and operations continue uninterrupted. This is a transition in law, not a disruption in operations. This is not a reversal of policy. The policy continues, not reversed. Same DMO concept, same strategic direction, stronger institutional framework. Reform is the natural next phase of maturation.

Turks and Caicos Islanders, this is not a policy reversal. It is the completion of the policy. The Bill preserves the DMO model, strengthens governance, clarifies decision rights, aligns with PFM accountability, institutionalizes tourism intelligence, ensures leadership continuity, and protects public funds. What we are doing here is simple. The concept remains, the governance improves, and the accountability meets the standard that the public expects. With that said, Mr. Speaker, I would like now to commit this bill to a Committee of the Whole.

Pursuant to Standing Order 93, I move that the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 be referred to a committee of the whole House. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education that the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 now be referred to a Committee of the Whole. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Aye.

SUSPENSION OF HOUSE FOR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

The ayes have it. Members, I will now suspend this Honourable House and call on our Deputy Speaker to chair the Committee of the Whole. This Honourable House is

hereby suspended.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Good afternoon, honorable members. We are now in the Committee of the Whole to scrutinize the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026. You would notice from the bill we are going to be taking this in parts. I am going to call on the Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that in accordance with Standing Order 97, the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 be called in parts. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Public Safety, that the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 will be taken into parts. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Madam Clerk, part 1.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 1

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Part 1 now stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of PPID, that Part 1 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Part 1?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Yes, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Honourable Premier.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 1 - CLAUSE 2 AMENDMENT

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

In Clause 2, I move that in Clause 2, by inserting the following definition in its appropriate alphabetical position: Airports Authority means the Turks and Caicos Islands Airports Authority established under Section 3 of the Airports Authority Act. In Clause 6.1, by inserting a new paragraph to support and advocate for airlift and air access in support of tourism demand, in coordination with the Airports Authority.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

No, that's it.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Okay, thank you. So what's this then?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Oh, B.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Okay, let me say it again. Okay, second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. The motion has been moved to amend by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Member for Cheshire Hall, that Clause 2 be inserted with the following definition in its appropriate alphabetical position: Airports Authority means the Turks and Caicos Islands authority established under Section 3 of the Airports Authority Act. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Aye.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Aye.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 2

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Are there any further contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Part 1 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Part 2, establishment of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority, clauses 3 to 21. Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Part 2 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, that Part 2 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Part 2?

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 2 - CLAUSE 6 AMENDMENT

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I'd like to move an amendment. Under Clause 6, I would like to amend for the renumbering of the existing paragraph K to paragraph L and inserting the following new paragraph to support K: to support and advocate for airlift and air access in support of tourism demand, in coordination with the Airports Authority.

Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Second. Motion to amend has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, that Clause 6.1, by renumbering the existing paragraph K to paragraph L and inserting the following new paragraph K, to support and advocate for airlift and air access in support of tourism demand in coordination with the Airports Authority. All in favour? Aye.

Those to the contrary? No.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 2

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Are there any further contributions?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The Chair recognizes the Honourable Acting Attorney General.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 2 - CLAUSE 6 TECHNICAL AMENDMENT

Deputy Attorney General:

Thank you, Madam Chair. With just notice and respect, I am inserting the new proposed 6K. We forgot to do some tidying up. I move that in 6.1.J, at the end of the sentence, you delete the word 'and'. And in the new 6.1.K, after the words 'Airport Authority', you delete the full stop or period and change that to a semicolon and space 'and'. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Before we get to second, can you go ahead with the amendment again? This is 6, functions of the authority?

Deputy Attorney General:

Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

6K.

Deputy Attorney General:

And 6J. We start from 6J.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Okay.

Deputy Attorney General:

In the existing 6J, deleting the word 'and' at the end of 6J. And in the new proposed K, the full stop becomes a semicolon and 'and'.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The motion to amend has been moved by the Honourable Acting Attorney General for Clause 6, Functions of Authority, J, by removing the word 'and', and K, we are going to put a semicolon at the end and 'and'. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it.

Are there any contributions? This is part 2.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 2

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026 - PART 2 - BOARD COMPOSITION

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just looking at board of directors 11, on page 9 of the bill, Clause 11, the directors of the authority shall be appointed by the minister with approval of cabinet from amongst persons from the private sector having the requisite knowledge of at least 5 years' experience in relevant tourism fields. My concern is about the villa and short-term rentals. How is that person going to be determined for the villa and short-term rentals? I can see a clear pathway for tourism and hospitality, hotel and resort, aviation and transport, and the others, but C was the concern.

How will we determine that person for the board from villa and short-term rentals?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

As a practical matter, these persons will be nominated by the stakeholder groups, because we would not necessarily know who they are. The stakeholder group will probably identify who they wish to represent them, and once they provide the credentials and due diligence is done, we would be obliged to take on board their appointee. I do not know that there is a villa management association outside of TCHTA, but I guess we will have to depend on TCHTA to identify that person, because I would not know who to. We do have villas now more and more.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. You have a follow-up question?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, thank you very much, Honourable Premier. That was my concern because I was going to ask if they have a Villa and Short-Term Rentals Association or if they are encapsulated in the Hotel and Tourism Association. You answered that, because that is the main thing. I was going to follow up with asking if that association has persons from all the islands.

But as there is no association, I will not go down that question, Madam Chair. That was the concern about the persons representing the villa and short-term rentals.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TOURISM AUTHORITY BOARD COMPOSITION AND REPRESENTATION

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much, Honourable Premier. That was my concern because I was going to ask if they have a Villa and Short-Term Rentals Association or if they are encapsulated in the Hotel and Tourism Association. You answered that, and that is the main thing. I was going to follow up by asking if that association has persons from all the islands, but since there is no association, I will not pursue that question.

That was the concern about persons representing the villa and

short-term rentals.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

It's not suggesting that we have to. It's one of the qualifications that they be in the industry, including short-term rentals. As a practical matter, I don't know that would be exercised given the limited number of appointments, and those appointments include some that are duplicative, as tourism and hospitality includes villa and short-term, hotel operations, aviation, and trucking. All of these are hospitality to some extent.

The composition of the board is 7 persons. Out of this list, there are about 14 people. It's just one of the criteria.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - PART 2

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Are there any further contributions to Part 2?

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 9.3 - AIRPORTS AUTHORITY INCLUSION

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

I have an amendment in Clause 9, Part 2. In Clause 9.3, we make an amendment by inserting the words 'the Airports Authority' after the word 'Statistics Act.' The amendment is to insert the words 'the Airports Authority' after 'Statistics Act.' I move that we insert the words 'the Airports Authority' after 'Statistics Act.' Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

I'm sorry, can you repeat that for me?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

In Clause 9.3, we insert the words—I'm told by the AG that there should be a comma first. Then after that comma, the Airports Authority will follow after the words 'Statistics Act.' Is that it, AG?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

No, Statistics Act.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Okay. Exception to Statistics Act. So I'll say it again. There's an amendment to insert a comma after the Airports Authority, and after the words 'Statistics Act.' Do I have a seconder? Is it clear, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

9.3

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. The motion to amend has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Public Safety, at Clause 9, by inserting the words 'the Airports Authority' after the word 'Statistics Act.'

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Right, except that it's a comma instead of a semicolon before the Airports Authority. So by inserting the words or the sign comma—

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Yes, that's what I said, inserting the words comma, the Airports Authority after the word Statistics Act.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Yes.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Huh?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Okay, no need for the semicolon.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Okay, good. I see it here. Thank you. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Aye.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Are there any further contributions?

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 11 - BOARD COMPOSITION

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

There is a contribution, an amendment under Clause 11. Under Clause 11 in paragraph C, I move for the deletion of the word '5' and substituting for it the word '4.' At the end of paragraph D, by deleting the word 'and' after the semicolon. At the end of paragraph E, by deleting the full stop and substituting a semicolon and 'and.' By inserting the following new paragraph F: the Chief Executive Officer of the Airports Authority or nominee ex officio.

Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The motion to amend has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of PPID, that in clause 11.2.1, in paragraph C, by deleting the word '5' and substituting it with '4'; at the end of paragraph D, by deleting the word 'and' after the semicolon; at the end of paragraph E, by deleting the full stop and substituting a semicolon and 'and'; and by inserting the following new paragraph F: the Chief Executive Officer of the Airports Authority or nominee ex officio. All in favor, aye.

Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Aye.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Are there any more contributions to Part 2?

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 17 - COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

In Clause 17, by deleting paragraphs A and C and substituting: A, the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, on which the Chief Financial Officer shall serve as an ex officio member without voting rights, and the Permanent Secretary responsible for Tourism or nominee as an ex officio member with voting rights. C, the Airlift and Marketing Committee, on which the Chief Sales and Marketing Officer shall serve as an ex officio member without voting rights, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Airports Authority or nominee as an ex officio member with voting rights. Do I have a second?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

I think this is—

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

No, this is part 4. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Public Safety, that in Clause 17, by deleting paragraphs A and C and substituting: A, the Finance Audit and Risk Committee, on which the Chief Financial Officer shall serve as the ex officio member without voting rights, and the Permanent Secretary responsible for Tourism or nominee as an ex officio member with voting rights; C, the Airlift and Marketing Committee, on which the Chief Sales and Marketing Officer shall serve as an ex officio member without voting rights, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Airports Authority or nominee as an ex officio member with voting rights. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it.

Are there any more contributions?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

GRAND TURK ENHANCEMENT FUND REPRESENTATION

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

For Clause 11 or Clause 17, I was wondering if consideration would be given to the chairman of the Grand Turk Improvement Enhancement Fund, for either the committee or the board here. I was looking for that person, and I have a note. Even on the 17th, if any consideration would be given for someone from that board that deals directly with the cruise ship industry—the enhancement fund from the cruise ship industry.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that we add that position under subclause 4 of 11, the board of directors. With the indulgence of the chair, I move that under Section 11-4, the director of the Grand Turk Enhancement and Sustainability Agency be added to the list of eligible persons to serve on the Board of Directors of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority.

Do I have a seconder? Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

He can move it. It's okay.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any further contributions?

CORRECTION TO AMENDMENT - GRAND TURK ENHANCEMENT FUND REPRESENTATION

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

There has to be a correction to the amendment. Legal advice is that in 11.4, on page 10, if you go to L, at the end of L, we delete the word 'and.' Then you add N at the end of M, and insert 'chairperson or nominee of the board of the Grand Turk Enhancement and Sustainability Agency.' The question is whether it should be the chair or nominee, as that gives more flexibility.

I suggest it be the chair or his or her nominee.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Of the board, without 'board of directors.' Can you state it for me please? 'Chairperson or nominee of the board of the Grand Turk Enhancement.' Thank you.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, that we're going to make an amendment to 11, in L, removing the word 'and,' replacing it with a semicolon, and inserting N after M to read 'chairperson/nominee of the board of the Grand Turk Enhancement and Sustainability Agency.' All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Aye.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - PART 2 CONCLUSION

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Are there any further contributions? Just to remind honorable members, we're still in part 2. Are there any further contributions? There being no further contributions to Part 2, the question is that Part 2 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - PART 3 COMMENCEMENT

Clerk:

Part 3. Meeting and proceedings of board, clauses 22 to 25. Honourable Premier.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - PART 3

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

I move that part 3 stands part of the bill. Do I have a second?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Seconded. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Public Safety, that Clause 3 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

FIRST READING OF BILLS

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - CLAUSE 3

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognises the Leader of the Opposition.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - CLAUSE 23 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, Madam Chair. I'm looking at Clause 23, disclosure of interests. I do believe that from time to time, a number of board members will be conflicted while dealing with hotels and tourism. I'm wondering how they're going to maintain quorum and voting with so many members being conflicted when it comes to disclosure of interests.

If the ministry and the ministers feel they can manage all the disclosure of interests, it's okay. But I want us to be cognizant that there will be many conflicts from time to time dealing with matters of tourism with board members.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Disclosure. I think conflict has to be interpreted in a narrow sense, and that if it relates to a particular property that I may have an interest in, rather than just the general industry. Otherwise, there would be nobody, because everybody is conflicted in terms of the general interest. But if I'm the chairperson or the president of TCHTA and if something arises that has to do with my particular property, for example, if there is a vote on selecting a property to have a conference at and one of them is mine, I shouldn't be voting.

If I'm a member of the board, I should recuse myself. That is my understanding, rather than a general interest.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 3

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier. Are there any further contributions to Part 3?

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - CLAUSE 24 PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Clerk:

To further clarify, in Clause 24 in respect of pecuniary interests, it provides that the Minister may, subject to such conditions as he may determine, appoint persons to act as directors or members for any specified period in any case in which the number of directors or members disabled by Section 23, disclosure of interest, at any one time would be so great a proportion of the whole as to impede the transaction of business of the board or committee.

So that covers the concern.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 3

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Acting AG. Are there any further contributions to— Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - CLAUSE 24 PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

No, I just want to say thank you again, and thank you, PS, and your team for making sure that is inside there, because that was one of the concerns of maintaining that quorum and members from chambers. I overlooked this. I read it but didn't know it spoke directly to that. So thank you very much.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 3 AND INTRODUCTION OF PART 4

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Are there any further contributions? Any contributions? Are there any further contributions to Part 3? There being no further contributions, the question is that Part 3 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Part 4, employees of the authority, clauses 26 to 39. Honourable Premier.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 4 EMPLOYEES OF THE AUTHORITY

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Part 4 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Second. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health that Clause 4 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Aye.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Part 4? Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, Madam Chair, just concerned about the number of top positions we have up to H, the chief executive officer. In the budget for last year, the chief executive officer's basic salary was $150,000. The upper financial officer was around $130,000. We have chief operational officer, chief destination management officer, chief sales and marketing officer, director of cruise tourism.

Looking at the directors, it's about $100,000 from the last budget. Director of human resource, director of compliance. I was wondering how much is this going to cost just with the directors and top of this agency? Not saying that it is not needed, but how much is that estimated to cost with their housing allowances and salary for all these top executives?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Honourable Leader of the Opposition, currently, all of these are already in the budget or provided for in the manpower budget except the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Compliance and Contracting. Given the importance of this industry to the economy and the expected uplift in funds generated through the destination enhancement fees, I don't believe that's going to be a problem. It's going to be difficult to operate this agency without those positions. We have to do the best we can to employ competent persons because the problems come with poor productivity.

If people are paying their way, you don't mind paying them, but if they're warming seats and not delivering, there's a productivity problem we need to address.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 4 AND INTRODUCTION OF PART 5 FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier. Are there any further contributions? Any further contributions to Part 4? There being no further contributions to Part 4, the question is that Part 4 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it. Madam Clerk. Part 5, Financial Provisions, Clauses 40 to 45. Honourable Premier.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 5 FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Part 5 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of PPID, that Part 5 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Part 5?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Just one, Madam Chair. The funding of the authority—will we expect this to eventually be a self-financing statutory body, or will we continue for it to be a subvented statutory body, being

as they are collecting revenue and, by your admission, Honourable Premier, some $6 million last year or so?

Is it expected to continue being subvented or eventually move to self-financing?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

I don't know exactly how the financial aspects would be handled. I'm assuming it wouldn't change from what it is now. The monies for the destination enhancement fees are paid into the Treasury. It's currently collected through the Airports Authority from IATA and then remitted to TCIG. The subvention is self-financing in the sense that it generates the fee that was meant to cover it, generates the money to pay for tourism, even if it's a pass-through. Partially a pass-through from the consolidated fund.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 5 AND INTRODUCTION OF PART 6 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier. Are there any further contributions to Part 5? There being no further contributions to Part 5, the question is that Part 5 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. Ayes have it. Madam Clerk. Part 6, Miscellaneous Provisions, Clauses 46 to 49.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 6 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Part 6 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. The motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Public Safety to have Part 6 as part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 6 AMENDMENTS AND NEW CLAUSE ON AIRLIFT AND ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, under Section 46, airlift and Route Development Collaboration. In Part 6, I move for renumbering of Clauses 46, 47, 48, and 49 to clauses 47, 48, 49, and 50 and inserting the following new clause.

Clerk:

Read this.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 6 NEW CLAUSE ON AIRLIFT AND ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Airlift and route development collaboration. The authority and the airports authority shall collaborate and coordinate on matters of airlift, air access, and air route development in a manner that promotes the growth of the tourism sector and avoids duplication of effort. For the avoidance of doubt, the authority, the board, or the airlift and marketing committee have no exclusive jurisdiction over airlift, air access, or air route developments. Nothing in this Act derogates from, limits, supersedes, or otherwise affects the functions, powers or duties of the Airports Authority under the Airports Authority Act.

The Airports Authority may continue to undertake, develop, fund and advance its own airlift, route development, and marketing program, including any related negotiations, agreements, incentives and arrangements with air carriers, without restriction under this Act and without any requirements to refer or seek the approval of the Authority, the Board, or the Airlift and Marketing Committee. The Authority and the Airports Authority may enter into a memorandum of understanding to give effect to this section.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 6 CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

As a consequence of the previous amendments, Clause 13(4) is amended by deleting the number 47 and substituting 48. By renumbering clauses 50, 51, accordingly.

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 6 NEW CLAUSE ON AIRLIFT AND ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. So the motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health that F of Part 6 be renumbering clauses 46, 47, 48, and 49 to clauses 47, 48, 49, and 50, and inserting the following new clauses: airlift and route development collaboration. The Authority and the Airports Authority shall collaborate and

coordinate on matters of airlift, air access, and air route development, in a manner that promotes the growth of the tourism sector and avoids duplication of effort. For the avoidance of doubt, the Authority, the Board and the Airlift and Marketing Committee have no exclusive jurisdiction over airlift, air access, or air route development; nothing in this Act derogates from, limits, supersedes, or otherwise affects the functions, powers, or duties of the Airports Authority under the Airports Authority Act; and the Airports Authority may continue to undertake, develop, fund and advance its own airlift, route development, and marketing programme, including any related negotiations, agreements, incentives and arrangements with air carriers, without restriction under this Act and without any requirements to defer, refer, or seek the approval of the Authority, the Board, or the Airlift and Marketing Committee.

The Authority and the Airports Authority may enter into a memorandum of understanding to give effect to this section. Thank you. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Thank you. Are there any further contributions?

TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL - COMMITTEE STAGE - PART 6 PROCEDURAL

Clerk:

Madam Chair—

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Acting Attorney General.

Clerk:

And there was the second part of the motion after that amendment? Yes, the second part of the motion was—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMMITTEE STAGE - AMENDMENTS TO TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

In addition to that, Motion G: As a consequence of the previous amendment, Clause 13 is amended by deleting the number 47 and substituting 48. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Clerk:

Aye.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Any further contributions? Thank you. Are there any further contributions to Part 6? There being no further contributions to Part 6, the question is that Part 6 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Part 7, Transitional Provisions, Dissolution of Organization, and Others. Honourable Premier, motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of PPID, that Part 7 stands part of the bill.

All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Part 7?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Under Part 7, I move for the renumbering of clauses 50 through 55 to clauses 51 through 56, and consequently in renumbering clause 51 by deleting the words Section 51, subsection 4, and entering Section 52, subsection 4. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, that Part 7, by renumbering the clauses 50 to 54 and 55 to clauses 51 to 55 and 56, and consequently in the renumbering of clause 51 by deleting the words Section 51 and substituting Section 52; All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Yes.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Madam Chair, just one for me at 55. As I alluded to in the debates, what is the expectation that we have to have this inside of the about distribution of assets of organizations by reason of dissolution. What is the reason? Why do we have to get that? Is there any expectation that assets will be

distributed once this is dissolved?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, through the Attorney General Acting, is this in relationship to the winding down of the existing entity, not the current one? In other words, what we're saying is that there will be no liability on the part of this organization for paying any money to anyone. I believe that's what we're saying. Am I right?

Clerk:

Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. The intention is to make clear that because the current DDMO is a nonprofit company and under ordinary Company principles, as stated before, there would be assets and liabilities. And so this makes clear that no shareholder in that company would be entitled to the assets of the DEMO.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Acting AG. Are there any further contributions? Part 7.

Clerk:

Just out of abundance of caution, for avoidance of doubt, Madam Chair, Section 52 makes clear that the assets would be transferred to the authority. So no current shareholder in the DMO would be entitled to the assets and the assets would be transferred to the new authority.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Are there any further contributions? There being no further contributions, the question is that Part 7 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Clerk:

Aye.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Thank you, Honourable Members. We've reached the end of the scrutiny to the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026, and I'm going to suspend to allow the Speaker to take the chair. This session is hereby suspended.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING AFTER COMMITTEE STAGE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable members, this honourable House now resumes its sitting. Pray be seated. Honourable Deputy Speaker.

CONCLUSION OF COMMITTEE STAGE - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Speaker, thank you. We have concluded the considerations for the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 with amendments, and I now turn these proceedings over to you.

THIRD READING - TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you. I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Speaker for chairing the Committee of the Whole and overseeing the passage of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026. Honourable Members, we are still on Orders of the Day and we are now at the 3rd reading of bills and we will now have the 3rd reading of the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, I move pursuant to Standing Order 99 that the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 be read for a 3rd time. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Otis Chuck Morris:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of PPID that the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 be now read a 3rd time. All in favour say

aye. All to the contrary, no.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Aye.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

This Act may be cited as the Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Act 2026 and shall come into operation on such date as the Governor may appoint by notice published in the Gazette, and different dates may be appointed for different provisions and different purposes.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Deputy Clerk. Honourable Premier.

PASSAGE OF TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS TOURISM AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, I move that pursuant to Standing Order 99, the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 do now pass. Do I have a seconder? Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of PPID, that the bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Aye.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Aye, 7. Honourable Members, the Bill entitled Turks and Caicos Islands Tourism Authority Bill 2026 do now pass.

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT MOTION

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues for the hard work we have done over the last couple of days. Thank you very much. Thank the Chair and the Clerk and everyone else. And I move that this House now stands adjourned. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, this Honourable House now stands adjourned.