



*Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities,  
Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities (including the THA)*

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**Summary of Proceedings  
Public Hearing**

Held on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, from 10:41 a.m. to 1:17 p.m.

**Venue:** Linda Baboolal Meeting Room, Parliamentary Complex, Cabildo Building, St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain

**Topic:** Follow-up inquiry into the 11th Report (11th Parliament) on an Inquiry into the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Regulated Industries Commission (RIC)

**Objective of the Inquiry**

The objectives of the inquiry are as follows:

1. To determine whether the recommendations from the 11<sup>th</sup> Report of the Committee were actioned/implemented by the MPU and the RIC;
2. To determine the extent to which the systems and processes developed by the RIC and the MPU translate to better services for and accountability to customers provided by the public utilities sector; and
3. To understand the RIC's current and future strategies in navigating the State's expansion into the renewable energy sector.

**Committee Members**

The following Members were present:

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|-----------------------------------|----------|
| • Ms. Sunity Maharaj              | Chairman |
| • Ms. Khadijah Ameen, MP          | Member   |
| • Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial-Ramdial | Member   |

The following Members were excused / absent:

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|------------------------|-----------------|
| • Mr. Esmond Forde, MP | Vice - Chairman |
| • Mr. Laurence Hislop  | Member          |



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| • Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP     | Member |
| • Mrs. Renuka Sagrarsingh-Sooklal | Member |

**Witnesses Who Appeared**

The following officials appeared before the Committee:

**Ministry of Public Utilities**

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|------------------------|--|
| • Ms. Nicolette Duke   | Permanent Secretary                              |
| • Ms. Arlene Collis    | Director, Economic Research, Policy and Planning |
| • Ms. Mauricia Pegus   | Manager, Customer Service                        |
| • Mr. Curtis Augustine | Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator            |

**Regulated Industries Commission**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| • Dawn Callender       | Chairman  |
| • Dr. Michelle Salandy | Executive Director                                |
| • Carol Balkaran       | Deputy Executive Director                         |
| • Nadia John           | Legal/Corporate Secretary                         |
| • Shameel Khan         | Chief Financial Officer                           |
| • Derrick Phillips     | Assistant Executive Director Technical Operations |



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**Key Issues Discussed**

The following are the main issues highlighted during discussions with the **Officials from the Regulated Industries Commission (RIC)** and the **Ministry of Public Utilities (MPU)**:

**Outlook for the country's water supply:**

- i. The MPU's meteorological services division holds an annual stakeholder forum on the weather outlook for the upcoming dry/wet season. After that, WASA and the Meteorological Services Division will issue seasonal public guidelines and advisories.
- ii. The 2025 dry season is expected to be harsher than in previous years, and WASA will make certain cuts in the water supply.
- iii. WASA published a review of their output at the beginning of the season.

**Community Water Improvement Programmes/Projects**

- iv. 91 Programmes/projects were completed across seven functional categories including; pipeline installations, new booster stations, upgrades to existing booster stations, well and water treatment plant rehabilitation and a new tank farm and water treatment plant.
- v. North West Water Supply Improvement Programme Phase 1 included upgrading nine boosters, pipeline installations, or replacements.
- vi. The South-West Water Supply and Improvement Programme included drilling and equipping wells, upgrading Granville Water Treatment Plant, chemical and pumping equipment aerate and filter works, raw and treated water pipeline, refurbishment of filters, and reactivation of Wells.
- vii. To date, the Well Development Programme has included 18 well developments in Trinidad. The areas that benefited include Chatham, Granville, Santa Cruz, Tucker Valley, Sangre Grande, Paramin, Las Lomas, Carlsen Field, Arouca, and Moruga.



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**Monitoring and Evaluation of Programmes/Projects**

- viii. The MPU, through a robust monitoring and evaluating unit, ensures value for money in the subventions provided to WASA and T&TEC.
- ix. The data collection exercise for WASA began in April 2024 and is currently ongoing. It is 60-75% completed and is expected to be completed by September 2025.
- x. The exercise is intended to compile information, such as customers' location and identifying customers as residential or commercial, to aid WASA's supply and demand planning.
- xi. Data collection and information go into creating policies and planning for projects and initiatives.

**Forex**

- i. Access to foreign exchange has not impacted WASA's or T&TEC's operations.
- ii. T&TEC requires forex and access to forex to import the materials and resources needed to supply their services, especially logistics.

**Debt Collection**

- iii. The current amount owed to T&TEC by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) is approximately \$2Bn.
- iv. T&TEC and WASA frequently engage MDAs to arrange payment plans. The arrangement of these payment plans include communicating with MDAs to determine the disbursement of funds by the MoF and encourage MDAs to allocate funds to debt repayment upon release.
- v. There is no policy that allows MDAs to not pay bills or to extend the deadline for the payment of debts by MDAs.
- vi. However, MDAs that provide key or essential services, such as hospitals, schools, and police stations, are sometimes given more flexibility in repaying debts due to the nature of the services they render and the occasional delay in the disbursement of funds from the Central Government.



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**Disconnection of Services - T&TEC**

- i. The Code of Practice for the T&TEC states that members of the public who are unable to pay bills from T&TEC can go to T&TEC and request a payment plan for debt repayment.
- ii. Code 3.2 of the Code of Practice requires T&TEC to contact members of the public or offer repayment plans before disconnection.
- iii. The code of practice does not prescribe penalties if T&TEC does not adhere to the codes. However, the customer can pursue other options for redress by bringing their concerns/ dissatisfactions to the RIC.

**RIC Rate Review Exercise**

- iv. The RIC determined utility rates based on a “revenue requirement” forecast. As such, inefficiencies, such as receivables or non-collection of debt for past periods, were not considered when electricity rates were being determined.
- v. The RIC recommended that the Ministry of Finance institute a “reserve vote,” which will ensure that money allocated to agencies for paying T&TEC bills would only be used for that purpose. If a release is received, it cannot be used for anything other than the payment of the bill.
- vi. T&TEC implemented the RIC’s recommendation to institute an interest payment on outstanding moneys to incentivise customers to pay bills on time.
- vii. The entire debt owed to NGC of approximately \$6Bn was not included in the rate determination by the NGC; a reduced debt was used considering the future repayment of debts owed by MDAs. The amount netted off in the rate determination exercise was less than the amount owed to NGC but more than the amount owed by the MDAs.
- viii. The report of the RIC containing recommendations for rate increases is currently before the Cabinet.
- ix. Regarding the price review proposed for WASA, WASA will respond by April 04, 2025, to the clarifications requested by the RIC on their OPEX, CAPEX, and demand forecast for the rate review exercise. At which point further inquiry will take place.



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**Service Delays**

- x. Delays have been reported in “Line extension jobs” for T&TEC and the restoration of lighting in playgrounds, specifically in the communities of Curepe and St. Augustine.

**Amendments to the RIC Act**

- xi. The amendments proposed by the RIC to the RIC Act were related to enforcement, renewable energies, and the ability to carry out the functions of the RIC.
- xii. A policy developed in 2016 exists to explain the areas required for amendment in the Act. The document is expected to be refined within the next year and submitted to Cabinet.
- xiii. Since 2001, the RIC has utilised various channels and mediums to propose changes to the RIC Act.

**Truck Borne Water Supply**

- i. There are challenges in meeting the full supply demand for the customers in Trinidad and Tobago.
- ii. WASA has contracted additional trucks to meet the water supply demand.
- iii. Truck-born water supply has focused on institutions such as homes for the aged, schools, and hospitals.

**Water Metering**

- iv. WASA is focusing on ensuring that the required infrastructure is in place to measure the water produced. However, at a later stage, WASA will consider universal metering.
- v. Currently, there are some metered commercial customers and very few metered residential customers

**Water Supply for Agriculture and Bottled-Water Producers**

- i. WASA has a pricing mechanism specifically related to the water supplied to farmers.



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- ii. Persons can visit WASA and apply through the Water Resource Agency of the Authority for a licence to extract water from naturally occurring sources.
- iii. Specific rates are applied to bottled water sellers' licenses and the agriculture sector.

**Quality Service Standards for WASA**

- iv. The Quality of Service Standards have not yet been submitted to the Cabinet, as WASA is awaiting the upgrade of its capabilities to meet the standards prescribed.
- v. WASA expects that the process improvements will take effect by mid-2026.

**Complaints received by the RIC**

- vi. The resolution rate for the complaints received by the RIC is around 80%.
- vii. Customers with concerns on T&TEC's breach of the Code of Conduct must first convey their concerns to the service provider. If they are unsatisfied with the response by T&TEC then customers can bring their concerns to the RIC as a second form of redress.
- viii. Any complaints regarding rates, billings and any area for unsatisfactory service can be made to the RIC via various methods, such as walk-in customers, emails, letters, phone calls, WhatsApp and any of the RIC's social media platforms and websites.

**Renewable Energy Initiatives**

- ix. The Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries is leading the "feed-in tariff" policy. However, the Ministry of Public Utilities is represented on that committee.
- x. The Ministry is reviewing the draft framework for utility-scale renewable energy.
- xi. The Ministry is engaged in providing Renewable Energy (RE) licences for non-utility scale solar generators and has provided 19 RE licences to members of the public.
- xii. The Ministry is developing a policy that includes Renewable Energy generators, the small-scale RE generators that persons can install in their homes.
- xiii. Individuals who are utilising solar energy systems in their homes are required to have licences for the generation of electricity under the T&TEC Act.



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The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube channel via the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyiSIzqX6Kc>

**Contact the Committee's Secretary**

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at [jsclasasc@ttparliament.org](mailto:jsclasasc@ttparliament.org) or 624-7275 Ext. [2277/2627/2282](#)

*Committees Unit  
April 09, 2025*