



Parliament of the Cayman Islands

Parliamentary Question No. 17

Answered on 27th April, 2023 -
Third Meeting 2022-2023 Session - Second Sitting

**Parliamentary Question asked by Mr. Joseph Hew,
Elected Member for George Town North
To**

**The Honourable Johany Ebanks, Minister responsible for
Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure**

QUESTION: Can the Honourable Minister update the House on the progress with the government's proposed undersea telecoms cable as well as an update on any other subsea telecoms cables proposed by private sector entities?

ANSWER: Madame Speaker, please allow me to provide an update to the to the elected member for George Town North's question regarding the CI Government's international subsea telecommunications system initiative.

As an essential critical infrastructure, the government has prioritised this initiative recognising that the existing systems are rapidly ageing:

- Maya-1 that has served the Cayman Islands, providing international communications, going into its 23rd year, is approaching its end of life and the expectation is that it will be closed at 25 years.
- The other system the Cayman-Jamaica Fibre System is 26 years and also vulnerable.

Madame Speaker, considering this infrastructure is responsible for 99% of international communications to and from these Islands we take this matter seriously.

With this understanding of a potential dilemma at hand, my team has acted accordingly and delivered an Outline Business Case report that explored and developed options for replacement systems.

The report has confirmed the existing systems are at risk and the government must act swiftly if the local telecoms sector will not.

Cabinet has now reviewed the options put forward in the business case and authorised the Ministry of PAHI to go out to market to confirm what interests exist for building the cable systems independently. Or, explore or identify a worthwhile partner/investor to the CI Government.

Madame Speaker, following this step - understanding **market** or **investors** interests, then it is the development of a **Full Business Case**. This is to obtain final specifications, actual costs to build the systems and provide a detailed solution for Cabinet's review and approval.

- (a) **As well as an update on any other subsea telecoms cable proposed by private sector entities?**

ANSWER:

Madame Speaker, to my knowledge several private sector entities, both local and overseas, have approached the Government as there is no capacity to build submarine cable systems on Islands. These entities are proposing to build submarine cable systems that are passing by the Cayman Islands from the USA onwards to Central and South America. The Outline Business Case report has evaluated some of these proposals and made recommendations accordingly.

Additionally, Madame Speaker, I have heard of local entities representing some of the larger international systems proposing to land a branch system that provides bandwidth to the Cayman Islands. However, I have no detailed information on any other subsea telecoms cable proposed by private sector.