PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO. 69
Answered on 19 November, 2026
Third Meeting 2026-2027 Session – Second Sitting

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
ASKED BY

HON. JOSEPH X. HEW
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, ELECTED MEMBER FOR THE CONSTITUENCY OF GEORGE TOWN NORTH

TO

HON. KATHERINE EBANKS-WILKS
MINISTER OF HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

QUESTION:

Can the Honourable Minister advise which of the landfill fire prevention and operational improvements identified in the Minister's answer to Parliamentary Question No. 123 on 1 May 2026 have now been completed; and, more specially, advise on the:
(a) procurement and commissioning of additional heavy equipment and fire wells;
(b) review of the Landfill Fire Prevention and Response Plan; and
(c) assessment of expanded air-quality monitoring?

ANSWER:

Mister Speaker,

I thank the Leader of the Opposition and Member for George Town North for his question.

Since my answer on 1 May 2026, the Department of Environmental Health has made good progress on the improvements I set out. Over 10,000 cubic yards of cover material have been placed across the site and the development of the filling areas is being progressed in accordance with operational plans.

(a) Of the heavy equipment identified, the procurements for the two dump trucks, the additional bulldozer and two compactors have been completed and submitted to the Public Procurement Committee. The typical lead time for this equipment is six months to a year from placement of order to arrival. The tyre shredder is currently being shipped from the UK expected to arrive in December and the medical waste incinerator contract has been awarded and the equipment is being manufactured at present.

In addition, contracts have started to further reduce the risk of fire from all our landfills. These contracts are to remove stockpiles of scrap metal and end of life vehicles from the Sister Islands and waste tyres from all islands. All these materials will be exported for recycling in the United States. These works are ongoing and are expected to be completed by Q3 2027.

Of the four new fire wells, two new wells have been completed and commissioned at the George Town landfill. The George Town landfill has a total of 12 fire wells including fire wells at located to support the perimeter of the active tipping area.

There are already fire wells at the landfills on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, and further additional wells will be complete by the end of December.

(b) The review of the Landfill Fire Prevention and Response Plan is under way and expected to be completed by end of December 2026. It drew on the lessons learned from the April fire, working with the Cayman Islands Fire Service and other key stakeholders.

(c) The Department of Environmental Health is completing its assessment of the air-quality monitoring network. It found that the monitoring methods give limited location-specific data during landfill fires, and recommended additional monitors, including continuous monitoring near the landfill.

Supplemental funds have been allocated for the development of an air quality monitoring network and DEH is in the process of procuring:

- Reference-grade monitor sites used for regulatory comparison and calibration of the wider network.
- Mid-cost monitors good for secondary fixed sites.
- Low-cost sensor nodes (particulate matter and gas sensors): which would be similar to existing instruments and would be co-located and correction-factored against the reference station.

My Ministry is also reviewing air quality standards for the Cayman Islands. Once the Environmental Health Bill 2026 is enacted, these will form the basis of air quality regulations.

As I committed on 1 May, I will provide the House with a full update once the air-quality assessment is complete.