



Ministerial Statement

by

The Hon. Wayne Furbert JP, MP

Minister of Transport

Update on Tackling Abandoned Vehicles

8th March 2024

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to provide an update on the progress made in tackling abandon vehicles across the island.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the calls from the public regarding the growing concern of abandoned vehicles, a challenge that has progressively deteriorated. The Transport Control Department (TCD) is spearheading the problem and have made considerable progress thus far.

Mr Speaker, before I give the update, I will provide a little background to the issues surrounding abandoned vehicles.

Mr Speaker, typically, abandoned vehicles are dealt with individually when reported by the public to TCD as part of our routine operations. The escalation of abandoned vehicles has necessitated a deliberate and concerted effort on our part to effectively tackle this problem. These abandoned cars and bikes mar the aesthetic appeal of our environment. However, it is also important to note, they also can pose various risks with regard to public safety and health. Abandoned vehicles can become potential breeding grounds for pests, pose fire hazards, and can obstruct traffic flow. It is high time we take decisive action to tackle this issue comprehensively.

Mr Speaker, in the latter part of January, the Ministry took proactive measures to inform the public about our initiatives to address the issue of abandoned vehicles. A press release was issued on January 24, 2024, urging the public to contact TCD and provide information about the whereabouts of abandoned vehicles. Additionally, social media platforms were utilized to disseminate information and raise awareness of our ongoing efforts. In conjunction with this effort, we established an e-mail address to accept reports. To date, the public has provided details for over 30 vehicles. I must state that we appreciate the assistance of the public, the Parks Department and Keep Bermuda Beautiful with this project.

Mr Speaker, our Traffic Officers have commenced issuing tickets to suspected abandoned vehicles identified across our island. These tickets serve as formal notice to the vehicle owners, notifying them of the impending removal of their abandoned property.

We acknowledge that the legal requirement for notice is a 7-day period. However, we believe in providing ample time for vehicle owners to rectify the situation. Hence, we are collecting abandoned vehicles after the 14th day of ticket issuance. This additional time is intended to encourage voluntary action by vehicle owners who may wish to reclaim their vehicles.

Mr Speaker, following the collection of the abandoned vehicles, we make all efforts to advise owners that upon a 30-day gazetted notice, the vehicle can be disposed of. We also emphasize the importance of responsible vehicle ownership and encourage individuals to take responsibility for vehicles they no longer wish to keep. Responsible ownership includes properly disposing of vehicles through the correct channels or donating the vehicle to charitable organizations whenever possible.

Mr Speaker, on average, the department has received up to 4 or 5 reports per day. This is both via email and the telephone. Since this initiative started, our Traffic Officers have ticketed 17 motor cars and 12 motorcycles and auxiliary bicycles, which accounts for 29 of the 30 reports received. The remaining vehicle had been moved prior to the Traffic Officers visiting the reported location. In fact, thanks to the co-operation of the public, a high percentage of vehicles are being moved by the owners. To date, the department has used a private towing company to remove six (6) cars. The Parks Department and a private cycle repair shop have assisted with the removal of eight (8) of the twelve reported cycles. Overall, this is a collaborative effort for which we are grateful.

Mr Speaker, after collection, some vehicles are being temporarily held at the Transport Control Department to wait out the 30-day period and until a more suitable location can be found. Some vehicles are kept at a secure, private location, free of charge. Those vehicles scheduled for disposal are taken to the airport dump after the fluids and batteries have been removed.

Mr Speaker, it is important to emphasise that the departments involved cannot deal with vehicles abandoned on private property.

Advice is given to affected property owners regarding the proper disposal of vehicles as stipulated in Section 68 of the Motor Car Act 1951. In short, this legislation states that after 30 days, the property owner “shall be deemed to be in possession of the motor vehicle”. Therefore, he/she can dispose of the vehicle after submitting a declaration to the Minister.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion we urge the public to continue to support this effort, which is a necessary step toward revitalizing the beauty and safety of our communities. Abandoned vehicles are not only an eyesore, but also a detriment to our environment and the well-being of our citizens. By making this concerted effort, we demonstrate our commitment to contributing to a safer, cleaner and more attractive streets for all Bermudians.

Let us continue to work together to ensure the success of tackling this problem and making Bermuda an even more vibrant and appealing place to live and visit.

Mr Speaker, Thank you.