



**MINUTES
OF THE
HONOURABLE JAMAICA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

At a meeting of the Members of the House of Representatives held pursuant to adjournment at Gordon House in the City and Parish of Kingston on Tuesday, the

14TH DAY OF APRIL, 2026

The House met at 2:23 P.M. o'clock.

PRAYERS

Prayer was read by Mr. Omar Newell.

The Speaker welcomed all to the sitting, with a special welcome Mr. Stanley Redwood, former President of the Senate, as well as students from the Bethlehem Moravian College. She also welcomed persons viewing the proceedings on the various social media platforms, particularly, the Public Broadcasting Corporation live stream. The Honourable Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Leader of the House, subsequently gave his welcome remarks.

CALL OF THE ROLL

PRESENT WERE:

Most Honourable Juliet Ann Marie Holness, MP, Speaker

Mr. Heroy Anthony Clarke, MP, Deputy Speaker (St. James, Central)

The Honourable Floyd O'Brian Green, MP, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, and Leader of the House

The Honourable Edmund Curtis Bartlett, OJ, CD, MP, Minister of Tourism

The Honourable Desmond Anthony Augustus McKenzie, OJ, CD, MP, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

The Honourable Robert St. Aubyn Montague, CD, MP, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development with responsibility for Land Titling and Settlements

The Honourable Delroy Hawmin Chuck, KC, MP, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

The Honourable Parnel Patroe Charles, Jnr, MP, Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Honourable Robert Nesta Morgan, MP, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development with responsibility for Works

The Honourable Ambassador Audrey Patrice Marks, OJ, MP, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Efficiency, Innovation and Digital Transformation

Dr. the Honourable Andrew O'Brien Wheatley, MP, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Science, Technology and Special Projects

The Honourable Marisa Colleen Dalrymple Philibert, CD, Minister of State in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

The Honourable Kerensia Alicia Morrison, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport

The Honourable Krystal Kerry-Ann Lee, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Wellness

The Honourable Zavia Taze Mayne, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service

The Honourable Delroy Hugh Williams, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local and Community Development

The Honourable Tova Tené Hamilton, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism

The Honourable Delano Orlando Seiveright, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

Mr. Richard Edward Azan, MP, Clarendon, North Western

Mr. Christopher Rew Brown, MP, St. Mary, South Eastern

Dr. Angela Rose Marie Brown Burke, MP, St. Andrew, South Western

Mr. Isat Aquaba Buchanan, MP, Portland Eastern

Mr. Peter Murcott Bunting, MP, Manchester, Southern

Ms. Nekeisha Shernicka Burchell, MP, St. James, Southern

Dr. Dayton Ricardo Campbell, MP, Westmoreland, Eastern

Mr. Lothan Cousins, MP, Clarendon, South Western

Dr. Alfred Patrick Dawes, MP, St. Catherine, South Eastern

Mr. Mark Jefferson Golding, MP, St. Andrew, Southern

Mr. Dennis Junior Gordon, MP, St. Andrew, East Central

Mr. Ian Dave Hayles, MP, Westmoreland, Western

Mr. Wavell Wayne Hinds, MP, Clarendon, Northern

Mr. George Anthony Hylton, CD, MP, St. Andrew, Western

Mr. Fitz Arthur Jackson, CD, MP, St. Catherine, Southern

Ms. Zuleika Amadie Jess, MP, St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

Mrs. Marlene Patricia Malahoo Forte, KC, MP, St. James, West Central

Mr. Andrew Antonio Morris, MP, St. Elizabeth, North Western

Mrs. Natalie Gaye Neita Garvey, MP, St. Catherine, North Central

Mr. Omar Anthony Newell, MP, St. Mary, Central

Mr. Phillip Feanny Paulwell, CD, MP, Kingston, Eastern and Port Royal

Mr. Mikael Asher Phillips, MP, Manchester, North Western

Ms. Andrea Marvalyn Purkiss, MP, Hanover, Eastern

Mr. Julian Jay Robinson, MP, St. Andrew, South Eastern

Dr. Kenneth Alphanso Russell, MP, St. Ann, South Eastern

Ms. Yvonne Rose Marie Shaw, MP, St. Thomas, Eastern

Mr. Duane Charles Edward Smith, MP, St. Andrew, North Western

Mr. Dwayne Francois St. Michael Vaz, MP, Westmoreland, Central

Mr. Clifford Everaldo Errol Warmington, CD, MP, St. Catherine, South Western

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The Honourable Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Leader of the House, made the following Statement relating to ***the Fisheries (Spiny Lobster) Regulations, 2026***:

Madam Speaker, I rise in this Honourable House today with a deep sense of purpose and fulfilment. I do so to inform this House and by extension, the people of Jamaica, that the Government has delivered on yet another of its commitments to modernise the management of

our fisheries sector and to safeguard one of Jamaica's most prized marine resources, the Caribbean Spiny Lobster.

Madam Speaker, you will recall that during my Sectoral Presentation to this Honourable House on the 27th of May, 2025, delivered under the theme "A New Era of Transformation and Resilience," I gave a clear undertaking that I would be introducing regulations to allow for the establishment of a framework to govern the lawful possession, sale, processing and export of spiny lobster during the closed season.

I am pleased to advise this Honourable House that the Fisheries (Spiny Lobster) Regulations, 2026 were promulgated on the 20th of March, 2026 and are now in full force and effect.

This, Madam Speaker, is the Government delivering on its word.

THE RATIONALE: WHY THESE REGULATIONS MATTER

Madam Speaker, for too long our fishers and fishing communities have operated within a system that created an unintended contradiction.

They harvest spiny lobster lawfully during the open season, investing their time, their fuel and their labour to bring in a legitimate catch. Yet, the moment the closed season begins, that very product becomes commercially stranded.

Fishers who did everything right found themselves unable to sell, store, process or export what they had lawfully caught. The system did not distinguish between illegal harvesting and legitimate stock that was already in circulation.

Madam Speaker, the result was not conservation. The result was waste, economic loss and uncertainty across the value chain.

It also created a gap in the market during the closed season, where businesses that depend on lobster had limited lawful avenues through which to access supply. That gap, Madam Speaker, created pressure within the system and, in some cases, incentives for the very illegal activity we are working to eliminate.

What these Regulations do is correct that deficiency in a structured and controlled way.

They establish a clear legal framework that allows lobster which has been lawfully harvested during the open season to be declared, accounted for and then handled within a regulated system during the closed period. That includes storage, processing, sale and export, all under the strict oversight of the National Fisheries Authority.

Madam Speaker, let me be absolutely clear. These Regulations do not, in any way, relax the prohibition on fishing during the closed season. Fishing for spiny lobster during the closed season remains absolutely prohibited. That position is unchanged.

What has changed is that we are now managing the system more intelligently. We are protecting the resource while allowing legitimate economic activity to continue in a way that is transparent, traceable and enforceable.

This ensures balance, so that our conservation objectives are met while our fishers, vendors, processors and exporters are not penalised for operating within the law

It is also about bringing greater order to the sector. With declaration requirements, notification thresholds and strengthened record-keeping, we are now able to track lobster within the system during the closed season in a way that was not previously possible.

Madam Speaker, this is what modern fisheries management looks like. It is deliberate, it is data-driven and it is designed to protect both the resource and the people who depend on it.

CLOSE SEASON AND PROTECTION OF THE RESOURCE

During the close season, the Regulations prohibit the capture, possession or sale of undersized lobster or lobster carrying eggs and require that such lobster be returned to the sea immediately. Protecting breeding stock and allowing juvenile lobster to mature are essential to maintaining a healthy and sustainable population.

Madam Speaker, the updated Regulations go further in strengthening these protections. We know, Madam Speaker, that lobster is enjoyed by many Jamaicans, but if the stock is not sustainably managed, there is a real risk that there will be no lobster to enjoy in the future. For that reason, we want to make it absolutely clear that fishing or harvesting lobster during the close season remains strictly prohibited. **The allowance for consumption and trade applies only to lobster that was legally harvested during the open season and for which the required declaration or notification has been submitted.**

DECLARATION OF LOBSTER HELD BEFORE THE CLOSE SEASON

Madam Speaker, **one of the key features of the updated framework is the introduction of a clear and enforceable declaration process.**

Any person in possession of lobster that was lawfully harvested before the start of the close season is now required to submit a declaration to the National Fisheries Authority within **seven days** of the beginning of the close season; that is by April 8th. This is in the form of an email to compliance@nfa.gov.jm and ceo@nfa.gov.jm.

This declaration must include details such as the declarant's name, telephone number and address, the quantity (in kg) of lobster being held, the form in which it is stored, whether whole, tails or otherwise and the location where it is being kept.

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that all lobster entering the close season can be accounted for, thereby strengthening oversight and eliminating uncertainty within the system. Madam Speaker, based on the declarations received by the NFA, a total of **177 individuals and entities** have declared lobster held prior to the commencement of the close season, accounting for **a significant volume of product currently within the system, all of which has been captured and verified through the declaration process.**

This level of compliance signals that stakeholders are engaging with the regulatory framework and strengthens our ability to effectively monitor and account for lobster in circulation during the closed period.

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS DURING THE CLOSE SEASON

Madam Speaker, the Regulations also address the movement of lobster during the close season. Where any person comes into possession of **more than fifteen kilograms** of lobster during the close season, particularly as a result of trade, that person is required to notify the NFA within seven days of coming into possession of the spiny lobster. This is to be emailed to compliance@nfa.gov.jm and ceo@nfa.gov.jm.

This notification must include name and address of the person from whom the spiny lobster was acquired, information on the source of the lobster, the date it was acquired, the quantity, the form of the product and the location where it will be stored.

This approach ensures that all significant transactions taking place during the close season are properly recorded and can be verified where necessary.

WHAT THE REGULATIONS ALLOW AFTER DECLARATION OR NOTIFICATION

Madam Speaker, once a declaration or notification has been properly made, the Regulations allow for the continued handling of that lobster within the law.

Under the previous regime, declared stock could generally be sold, exported or processed only within the first **21 days** of the close season, after which possession became unlawful unless permission had been granted by the National Fisheries Authority to store or export during that period. **What these new Regulations now do is create a more practical and structured system.** Once lobster has been lawfully harvested in the open season and properly declared by April 8, **it may continue to be possessed, traded and consumed during the close season within the law.**

Fishery Inspectors are empowered to carry out inspections to verify the information submitted, ensuring that compliance is supported by active monitoring.

EXPORT DURING THE CLOSE SEASON

Madam Speaker, the Regulations also introduce a structured process for export activity during the close season.

Any person who intends to export lobster during this period **must apply to the NFA for authorization and provide details outlining the intended export**, the nature of the product and the location where it will be stored pending export.

This ensures that export activity is based on declared and verified stock and is conducted within a clearly defined regulatory framework, Madam Speaker.

RECORD-KEEPING AND TRACEABILITY

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the updated Regulations place strong emphasis on record-keeping and traceability across the supply chain. Prescribed premises, including restaurants, hotels and storage facilities, are now required to maintain detailed transaction records for a period of **three years**. These requirements support a system where lobster moving through the market during the closed season can be properly tracked, verified and inspected. The Regulations also strengthen enforcement by allowing inspectors to **seize lobster found during the closed season that has not been properly declared or notified.**

STRENGTHENING FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND STOCK RECOVERY

Madam Speaker, we are already seeing the results of strengthened fisheries management. The lobster fishery in Jamaica has remained **viable over the last ten years**, and the production data presented by the National Fisheries Authority bears this out. The trend from **2015 to 2025** shows that while annual production fluctuates, the fishery has remained active and productive, with output generally staying within a sustainable range and returning to approximately **320 metric tonnes in 2025**, following stronger years such as **2017** and **2022**. Over the longer period from **1996 to 2025**, the data shows greater variation in earlier years, but greater stabilisation in more recent years as management systems have become more robust. The NFA has made it clear that this does not indicate a reduction in stock, but rather the impact of stronger management strategies designed to prevent overexploitation.

A **39-day spiny lobster survey** conducted across the entire Pedro Bank in 2023 estimated the total biomass of fishable lobster at approximately **2,000 metric tonnes**. That same survey determined a **maximum sustainable yield of 323 metric tonnes** and a **maximum economic yield of 314 metric tonnes**. That is important because it tells us, Madam Speaker, that the fishery is not being left to chance. It is being actively assessed, scientifically managed and kept within limits that support long-term sustainability.

Madam Speaker, this improvement is also a direct result of increased **institutional capacity**. Under the former Fisheries Division, the complement stood at approximately **60 personnel**. Today, the National Fisheries Authority is staffed with **275 individuals**. The Compliance Branch alone has **42 officers**, of whom **39 are gazetted fishery inspectors**, forming the dedicated enforcement arm of the NFA. In addition, the Gazette of Fishery Inspectors for 2026 includes a total of **171 individuals**, and by law, **members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force and the Jamaica Defence Force are also fishery inspectors**. That means the enforcement reach available to the State to address fisheries-related offences is now far more expansive than it once was.

ENFORCEMENT

Madam Speaker, enforcement of these Regulations is being carried out through a strengthened and coordinated framework. The National Fisheries Authority, through its island-wide Compliance Unit, is actively monitoring activities across key fishing communities, landing sites, markets and storage facilities. This effort is supported by the Jamaica Constabulary Force Agricultural Protection Branch, which works in close collaboration with the NFA to detect and disrupt illegal activity.

Madam Speaker, that enforcement coordination is not theoretical. In the last quarter alone, the Enforcement Branch of the National Fisheries Authority and the Agricultural Protection Branch of the Jamaica Constabulary Force collaborated in **19 intelligence-led enforcement operations**, resulting in **6 arrests** and **5 seizures** for the illegal possession of conch during the conch close season. That level of coordination demonstrates the seriousness with which close season protections are being enforced and sends a clear signal that illegal activity in our fisheries will be pursued.

There is active surveillance of the illegal catching, handling, storage and distribution of lobster during the close season and targeted operations are being conducted to ensure compliance. **Any individual, company or establishment found operating outside of the prescribed Regulations will be subject to enforcement action and prosecuted in accordance with the law.**

Breaches of the Regulations constitute offences and may be liable, upon conviction, to **a fine of up to three million dollars or to a term of imprisonment of up to three years, or to both.**

This, Madam Speaker, ensures that the rules are applied consistently and that compliance is taken seriously across the sector.

SUPPORTING COMPLIANCE

Madam Speaker, to support stakeholders in understanding and complying with the new requirements, the National Fisheries Authority has developed a clear messaging on both social and traditional media, outlining the declaration and notification process, including timelines and required information.

This is to ensure extensive reach to fishers, vendors, processors and exporters.

Engagement with stakeholders is ongoing to ensure that implementation is smooth and that all persons operating within the sector are aware of their obligations.

CLOSING

Madam Speaker, these Regulations represent a necessary step in strengthening the management of one of Jamaica's most valuable marine resources. They provide clarity, improve oversight and establish a system that allows the industry to function while protecting the long-term sustainability of the lobster stock.

The expectation is clear. Persons operating within the sector must comply with the declaration and notification requirements, maintain proper records and operate within the framework established under the law. Through this approach, we safeguard the resource, support livelihoods and position the fisheries sector for continued growth and stability.

At the centre of this industry are our fishers, men and women who depend on the sea for income and for survival. These Regulations ensure that their work can continue, not just for this season, but for many seasons to come, supported by a resource that is protected, properly managed and able to sustain them and their families over the long term.

Madam Speaker, this is the new era of fisheries in Jamaica, an era in which this Government protects our marine resources through smart, enforceable regulation, treats our fishers as partners in conservation and deliver on what we say we will do.

Jamaica's spiny lobster is a national treasure, a source of livelihood for thousands of our fisherfolk, a cornerstone of our culinary identity and a resource of significant export value. These Regulations ensure that we manage this resource wisely for this generation and for generations to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The text presented is that which was submitted by the Minister's Office. Please consult Hansard for Verbatim Report.

(Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Michael Holness, ON, PC, MP, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Minister of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development, entered and took his seat).

(The Honourable Juliet Samantha Cuthbert Flynn, OD, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security and Peace, entered and took her seat).

(The Honourable Dr. Horace Anthony Chang, OJ, CD, MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security and Peace, entered and took his seat).

(Miss Joyce Denise Daley, MP, St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat).

Dr. Dayton Campbell responded on behalf of the Opposition.

(Dr. the Honourable Christopher Charles Tufton, CD, MP, Minister of Health and Wellness, entered and took his seat).

(The Honourable Daryl Wesley Phillip Vaz, MP, Minister of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy, entered and took his seat).

Mr. Mark Golding and Mr. Peter Bunting asked questions for clarification.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of each of the following:

Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of
The Real Estate Board &
The Commission of Strata Corporation
for the Financial Year 2019/2020
[Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development]

Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the
Jamaica Agricultural Commodities
Regulatory Authority
for the Financial Year 2018 - 2019
and its related

MINISTRY PAPER

Numbered 21/2026

Titled:

Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Jamaica Agricultural Commodities
Regulatory Authority for the Year Ended March 31, 2019
[Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Mining]

White Paper No. 01/2026

Titled:

National Destination Assurance Framework & Strategy
[Ministry of Tourism]

Auditor General's Department Certified Appropriation Accounts		
<u>Head</u> 2829	<u>Ministry/Department</u> Supreme Court	<u>Year</u> 2012/2013
<u>Head</u> 28052	<u>Ministry/Department</u> Legal Reform Department	<u>Year</u> 2019/2020
<u>Head</u> 20000	<u>Ministry/Department</u> Ministry of Finance and the Public Service	<u>Year</u> 2020/2021
<u>Head</u> 20000C	<u>Ministry/Department</u> Ministry of Finance and the Public Service	<u>Year</u> 2020/2021
<u>Head</u> 27000	<u>Ministry/Department</u> Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs	<u>Year</u> 2021/2022
<u>Head</u> 27000	<u>Ministry/Department</u> Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs	<u>Year</u> 2022/2023

[Auditor General's Department]

BY WAY OF INFORMATION

Report of the Regulations Committee of the Senate on its Deliberations on:

1. The National Housing Trust (Housing Benefit) (Special Selection) (Catherine Estates Housing Development) (Batch 1) Order, 2025
2. The National Housing Trust (Housing Benefits) (Special Selection) (Industry Cove Manor Housing Development) Order, 2025
3. The National Housing Trust (Housing Benefits) (Special Selection) (Masemure Flats Housing Development) Order, 2025

[Houses of Parliament]

(The Honourable Donovan St. Ledger Williams, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat).

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The Honourable Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Leader of the House, reminded the House that on March 19, 2026, the Prime Minister gave notice that at the next meeting of the House he would move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled, “the National Reconstruction and Resilience Authority Act, 2026”. He therefore sought and obtained the leave of the House to withdraw the Bill and to have a new Bill tabled.

The Honourable Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Leader of the House, moved that the items “Notices of Motions Given Orally” and “Presentation of Bills without Leave of the House First Obtained” be recommitted.

Seconded by: Dr. Dayton Campbell
Agreed to

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Minister of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development, gave notice that at the next meeting of the House he would move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled, “the National Reconstruction and Resilience Authority Act, 2026”.

He further gave notice that at a later stage that day he would move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable him to take the first reading of the Bill.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Minister of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development, having obtained suspension of the Standing Orders moved that a Bill shortly entitled, “the National Reconstruction and Resilience Authority Act, 2026” be read a first time.

Clerk read Bill a first time.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Minister of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development gave notice of second reading and further gave notice that at a later stage that day he would move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable him to take the second reading of the Bill and to take it through all its concluding stages.

(Mr. Damion Orande Crawford, MP, St. Catherine, North Western, entered and took his seat).

TRIBUTE

The Members of the House paid tribute to Dr. Mavis Gilmour, former parliamentarian and Minister of Education, on the occasion on her 100th birthday. Speeches were made by the Honourable Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Leader of the House; the Honourable Juliet Cuthbert Flynn, Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security and Peace; Mr. Mark Golding; the Honourable Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism; and Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Minister of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(The Honourable Franklin Robert Witter, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, entered and took his seat).

(The Honourable Rhoda Moy Crawford, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information, entered and took her seat).

Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Minister of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development, having obtained suspension of the Standing Orders moved that a Bill entitled, “AN ACT to Make provision for the management and implementation of the post-disaster reconstruction and resilience efforts consequent on the passage of Hurricane Melissa and for resilience generally, to establish the National Reconstruction and Resilience Authority; and for connected matters” be now read a second time.

(The Honourable Alando Nathaniel Terrelonge, MP, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, entered and took his seat).

(Mrs. Heatha Mavarie Miller Bennett, MP, Hanover, Western, entered and took her seat).

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Minister of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development, having spoken for 45 minutes, the Honourable Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Leader of the House, moved that his time for speaking be extended sufficiently to allow him to continue his presentation to its conclusion.

Seconded by: Mrs. Marlene Malahoo Forte
Agreed to

Further debate on the substantive motion was, by leave, deferred.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:42 p.m., the Honourable Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Leader of the House, moved that the House do now adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Seconded by: Mr. Christopher Brown
Agreed to

The House adjourned accordingly.

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Juliet Holness, MP
Speaker