



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
To the House of Assembly

by

The Hon. W. Lawrence Scott, JP, MP
Minister of Transport

Update on the New Electric Buses

Friday, 10th December 2021

Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, during the Budget debate, I announced that as part of the Government's commitment to protecting the island's environment, the Ministry of Transport is starting by purchasing 30 electric buses.

The buses were purchased from Golden Dragon Bus Company Ltd in China in August. Each bus cost USD114,200. By comparison, the last diesel bus purchased from Portugal in 2018 cost USD250,000. The Company recently completed the pre-delivery inspections and is currently preparing the buses to be shipped from Shanghai to Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I am very excited to announce that the project has progressed despite global supply chain issues. We anticipate that the buses will be arriving on three shipments over the next few months. But more so because they are scheduled to go into service in April 2022.

Mr. Speaker, an engineer from Golden Dragon Bus Company, will be based in Bermuda for three months after the buses arrive to support with commissioning and training of the Department of Public Transportation's staff. Additionally, the Department's technicians will participate in electric vehicle training online via the Institute for Motoring Industry, UK and locally via the Bermuda College.

The Department is also recruiting additional bus operators to ensure that we have the resources required to provide a reliable and consistent public bus service. The job advertisement will run from 17 December through 31 December 2021.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the Government's economic recovery plan, we are in the process of constructing interim charging stations at Dockyard, St. George and Fort Langton bus depots to support the initial 30 buses until the permanent charging infrastructure is ready. These charging stations will be fed from existing BELCO circuits and completed in March 2022.

The initial RFP for the new electric buses envisioned transitioning the entire bus fleet to electric over ten years. The permanent charging infrastructure will accommodate the whole fleet. There will be a total of 30 charging stations servicing 60 bus bays, a 450 kilovolt-amps rooftop solar PV array and a battery energy storage system at the Fort Langton bus depot. The RFP for this new infrastructure is concluding, and the contract award is anticipated early in the new year. The build will take one year to complete.

Mr. Speaker, although the RFP included buses with wheelchair access, the new buses are not wheelchair accessible. We have revisited feedback from the 2019 Transport Green Paper, consulted with relevant stakeholders, and believe that a dedicated Programme would better serve persons with motorized wheelchairs. The Ministry is currently working on a Paratransit Programme, and I will be sharing more on this initiative in February.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to remind commuters who use public buses and ferries to follow the Ministry of Health COVID-19 guidelines for travelling on public transportation. Not only for their safety but also for the safety of the hard-working staff of the Departments of Public Transportation and the Department of Marine and Ports Services.

Thank You, **Mr. Speaker**!

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