

MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT: PROPOSED DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS (P.70/2002) - SIXTH AMENDMENT

(1) *In paragraph (a) after the words “dated 25th April 2002,” insert the words -*

*“except that in the said Appendix 2 -*

- (i) *at the end of Section 1.6.1, after the word ‘care.’ insert the following sentence “The Department shall continue to have responsibility for the Environmental Health Department, which shall be re-named the ‘Health Protection Department’”;*
- (ii) *in Section 1.5.1, after the words “environmental policy and regulation” insert the words “except those functions presently undertaken by the Environmental Health Department””*

SENATOR S. SYVRET

**REPORT**

The purpose of this amendment is to, as far as is practical, avoid an obvious conflict of interest within the proposed Environment Department, and to resolve a misunderstanding as to the purpose and function of the present Environmental Health Department.

The factors, considerations and decisions relating to ‘land use policy’ and ‘planning and development control’ may well, from time to time, be in conflict with what is, in essence, a public health protection function, as presently exercised by the Environmental Health Department. There may be overwhelming, pragmatic planning and land use reasons for decisions to, for example, build a new incinerator, locate a composting site in a particular location, or permit the use of disused quarries for toxic waste disposal. In such cases the public must be able to rely upon the protection of a separate health protection function that will not be under the same pressures as the planning function.

The name ‘Environmental Health Department’ has probably been responsible for the common belief that its work is simply ‘environmental’ and can therefore be rolled up in an Environment Ministry. The principal function of this Department is the protection of human health. It is proposed to rename it the Health Protection Department, which more accurately reflects its work.

There are no additional financial or manpower implications arising out of this amendment.