



**Statement by MP Joey Hew, The Deputy Leader Of The Opposition**

**Comment on CNS Article on the Pre-election Spending By The NRA**

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VvTgusArqE>

An article on the Cayman News Service blog site had a headline stating that a recent report by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) “finds pre-election abuse of public cash” with work carried out by the National Roads Authority (NRA).

In fact, the OAG report did not say that the Auditor General found any abuse at all. There was a concern that abuse could occur, but there was no indication that any abuse was found. There is a good reason for that – it’s because there was no abuse of public funds.

What should be obvious is that the NRA working to complete the road works that were budgeted for and that it had committed to doing should be a positive thing. The NRA had indicated in mid-2020 that it would be accelerating the road infrastructure projects to make up for time lost due to the pandemic. This was reported widely in the media, including by CNS. These included work on the East West Arterial extension, Shamrock Road widening, the Kings connector, the airport connector road, and the Godfrey Nixon Way extension.

I supported the NRA’s decision to accelerate delivery and welcomed their commitment to getting more road improvements delivered. Acceleration was necessary to make up for time lost because of the pandemic, and with reduced traffic volumes on our roads, this was an ideal time to get as much work completed as possible prior to the country opening to tourism again.



*At the time, I said: “We are using this time as an opportunity for the National Roads Authority to proceed with critical road construction and pavement rehabilitation projects that would prove more difficult and costly to achieve during regular traffic conditions.”*

So, the CNS headline is disappointing and misleading as it wrongly paints the men and the women who lead the NRA as possibly being ‘corrupt’. Nothing could be further from the truth, especially with no evidence provided, only ill-conceived presumptions.

The NRA is an independent Authority that is charged with one task – to use public funds to build the road infrastructure that it deems necessary for the benefit of the people of the Cayman Islands. There is no abuse of public funds in the NRA spending those funds for the purpose they were intended.

As the Minister responsible, it was my role to support the NRA and work with them to ensure they could deliver their programme and to hold them to account for their effectiveness. That is the role I carried out throughout my time in office, including in the pre-election period. I did not interfere with the work of the NRA.

In closing, I am surely glad that the NRA sought to fix the problems facing the travelling public, especially those coming from the Eastern Districts and all those from Prospect & Red Bay who must traverse the Tomlinson, Prospect and Hurleys roundabouts. I am equally glad that the now Minister has continued the roadworks that we started, and I am hopeful that he will get these much-needed projects completed.

**~END~**