



**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES**

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Media Release



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**CLAIMS RELATED TO STUDLEY PARK ENTERPRISE LIMITED'S BLASTING PERMIT AND MINERALS
LICENCE**

Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, the Honourable Stuart R. Young, M.P., has observed with concern, the recent statements made by Tobago House of Assembly (THA), Assemblyman Trevor James, Secretary for the Division of Infrastructure, Quarries and Urban Development with respect to the outstanding Mining Licence and Blasting Permit for the Studley Park Quarry operations in Tobago and advises as follows.

It is a legal requirement of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago that every quarry must obtain a Mining Licence before it can legally operate (see the Minerals Act. Chap. 61:03 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago). This law applies to every single quarry operation whether it is carried out in Tobago or in Trinidad. The administration of this act is carried out by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries with the mandate of protecting the interests of the people of Trinidad and Tobago with respect to the extraction of minerals.

There is a process in law where any entity wishing to conduct quarry operations must apply for a Mining Licence and this application, which is statutorily determined, is administered by the Minerals Division at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries.

Upon Minister Young's enquiry into what he has discovered are the baseless allegations of Assemblyman Trevor James that there was some attempt to negatively impact Studley Park

Enterprise Limited's (SPEL) operations he was informed by the Director of the Mineral's Division that SPEL

last applied for a Mining Licence on April 12, 2023 after the company's previous mining licence application expired without the company satisfying all statutory requirements for the grant of the Licence. Thus far, SPEL has not completed all of the legal and mandatory requirements for the grant of a Mining Licence.

With respect to the audit being conducted to calculate Royalties due and owing, this is a legal requirement of the said Minerals Act and Regulations which clearly state that where a mining operator operates on state land, royalties are payable to the state. In this regard, SPEL as an occupant of state land to which mineral rights are reserved to the state, is required to pay royalties in respect of all minerals mined. Minerals Audits form a vital tool in the checks and balances of the verification system for determining revenues owed to the state. Additionally, no licence to mine or process should be granted until a verification of the status of all outstanding royalties owed to the state has been executed. This audit exercise which is ongoing has unfortunately been hampered by the lack of records presented by SPEL, but it is expected that the audit will be completed in the upcoming weeks.

The Minerals Division staff have advised that contrary to the claims made by Assemblyman Mr James, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries has done all in its power to streamline the process in order to aid SPEL's application process.

With respect to the allegations surrounding the issuance of a Blasting Permit, Blasting Permits are not issued by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. These permits are granted by the Commissioner of Police with input from the Blasting Advisory Committee (BAC) following a very specific procedure as follows:-

- An application for a blasting permit, or a renewal of a blasting permit is made to the Chief Inspector OSHA;
- The BAC convenes to discuss the merits of the application;
- If necessary, further information is requested from applicants;
- Field verifications are conducted by OSHA inspectors;
- Background checks are performed by TTPS on all individuals listed in the application;

- Pending successful completion of OSHA inspections and TTPS verifications the Chairman of the BAC issues a recommendation for the issue/ renewal of the Blasting Permit;
- The Commissioner of Police issues the Blasting Permit to the applicant for a period of 1 – 3 years depending on the recommendation of the BAC.

It must be noted that Blasting Permit renewals are not automatic but must conform to a rigorous series of checks and balances designed with national security and public safety in mind. Additionally, this system is not unique to SPEL but is the procedure that all applicants from Trinidad and Tobago must follow.

Having regard to the above Minister Young records his disappointment with respect to the public commentary of Assemblyman Mr. Trevor James and he advises that the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago are applicable to SPEL and its operations.

In conclusion it is reiterated that the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries is committed to seeing quarry operators, including SPEL, become properly licensed and the Ministry will continue providing all of the assistance and guidance that is necessary for this to happen.

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