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PRESS RELEASE

Commission of Inquiry into the Sugar Cane Industry to hold Public Hearings in late August and early September

Belmopan, August 25, 2024.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Sugar Cane Industry announces that its public hearings will commence in late August, and the first set of hearings will be held from Tuesday, August 27th to Saturday, August 31st, at Escuela Secundaria Técnica México, in San Roman village in the Corozal District. The stakeholders that have been called for the public hearings in the north include Belize Sugar Industries Limited (BSI), Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA), Corozal Sugar Cane Farmers Association (CSCPA), Progressive Sugar Cane Farmers Association (PSCPA), Northern Sugar Cane Farmers Association (NSCFA), and the various arms of the Sugar Industry Control Board (SICB).

Following the sessions in the north, the venue for the public hearings will move to the Ministry of Agriculture's conference room at the agriculture showgrounds in Belmopan. Santander Sugar, Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) are being called to attend the public hearings in Belmopan.

While the public will not be allowed to sit in the official venues, the hearings will be streamed live on the Government of Belize Press Office Facebook Page and will be recorded. The press, including radio and TV stations, as well as newspapers and online media outlets, will be allowed to attend the full hearings or components of the hearings physically and to stream or record them as well.

Arrangements for the press to attend the public hearings can be made by contacting Mike Rudon at Tel/WhatsApp 671-0731 or Hugh O'Brien at Tel/WhatsApp 670-5865.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Sugar Cane Industry was made official on March 19th, 2024, when Prime Minister John Briceño signed a statutory instrument bringing it into law. The Commission is analyzing the whole value chain of the sugar cane industry. It is expected to present recommendations on various components of the industry and submit its final report to the Government of Belize by November 30th, 2024.

Members of the Commission include Chairman, Mr. Wayne Piper and five (5) Commissioners, namely Mr. Robert Mariette and Mr. Vinod Ramharai from Mauritius, Mr. Jeffery Joseph from Belize, Mr. Andrew Church from South Africa and Mr. Simon Gibbons from the United Kingdom. Ms. Lorena Posada was appointed Secretary to the Commission, and Mr. Hugh O'Brien was appointed Lead Coordinator for the Government of Belize. Mr. Marcos Osorio, Chairman of the Sugar Industry Control Board (SICB), and Mr. Jose Novelo made up the rest of the local coordinating team. Mr. Kirty Neermul was appointed Technical Coordinator to the Commission.

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