



PR#125-25

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, July 17, 2025.

The Cabinet met on 15th July 2025.

- In partial fulfilment of Plan Belize 2.0 Cabinet has declared the weekends of July 31st and August 15th as GST Free Back to School weekends. This means that no GST will be charged on goods purchased on Thursday, 31st July to Saturday, 2nd August 2025, and Friday, 15th August to Sunday, 17th August 2025.
- The Minister of Education briefed the Cabinet on the situation between the University of Belize (UB) and the UB Union, who were protesting for a 9 percent pay increase, indicating that the matter was between the UB Board of Trustees and the Union. The Minister further informed Cabinet that the Government's total contribution to the University of Belize is over \$13.5 million, of which \$7.5 million is given in subventions and more than \$6 million in financial assistance to students.
- Cabinet discussed the escalating sargassum situation, which has seen a 70 percent increase in regional influx compared to the last major episode in 2022. In response, Cabinet has endorsed an Emergency Response Plan jointly developed by the Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Sports & Diaspora Relations and the Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation. The plan includes the provision of financial assistance to support cleanup operations in affected coastal communities. The Government of Belize will allocate funding and offer incentives to facilitate the collection and transportation of sargassum to designated disposal sites. Recognizing the need for a more sustained and coordinated approach, Cabinet has also instructed the Sargassum Task Force to develop medium- to long-term strategies, including the creation of a monitoring and early warning system to trigger future emergency responses as necessary. Cabinet further called for enhanced collaboration among key ministries, local government authorities, and the private sector to ensure an effective and timely response to this growing environmental and economic threat.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the ratification by the Government of Belize of the Agreement Establishing the Advisory Centre on World Trade Organization (WTO) Law, an international institution providing legal services and capacity-building support to developing countries and Least Developed

Countries in matters related to the WTO. This will assist Belize in meeting its obligation under the treaty to effectively prepare its reports for Trade Policy Reviews and to respond to disputes or challenges that may arise.

- To modernize and align legislation that governs municipal authorities, Cabinet approved the amalgamation of the three separate Acts, namely, the two City Council Acts and the Town Councils Act, into a single Municipal Government Act. Cabinet also approved the modernization and amalgamation of the accounting regulations that govern the financial and accounts management of City and Town Councils in Belize. This will provide better governance, greater uniformity, and increased efficiency and effectiveness of the councils.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the Ministry of Local Government to advance an initiative to modernize and amend the Intoxicating Liquor License Act for improved administration and control of the sale and consumption of liquor in Belize.
- Following the successful completion of the National Identification pilot project, Cabinet has granted approval for the full-scale rollout of the National ID. This pivotal decision also includes the development and implementation of a comprehensive onboarding strategy to ensure that all citizens are registered in a timely and effective manner. The nationwide adoption of the National ID will significantly enhance the efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness of public and private services in Belize, marking a major step forward in the country's digital transformation agenda.
- Cabinet gave its approval for the introduction of legislation to establish a legal and institutional framework for Belize's climate change governance and will introduce the Climate Change and Carbon Market Initiatives Bill in the House of Representatives. This bill will provide the operational guidelines for climate change and carbon market activities in Belize.
- Building on the success of the past three Climate Week events, Cabinet encourages all Belizeans to participate in Climate Week 2025, which will be held in Belize City from 25th to 29th August 2025. A key focus of the event will be on engaging youth and empowering their active participation in climate action initiatives, so they can better understand the vital role they play in a sustainable future.
- Cabinet welcomed an update on the 2025 Investment Summit, to be held in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, from 3rd to 5th September 2025. This year's Summit will highlight investment opportunities in priority sectors and position Belize as a resilient, investment-ready, connected, forward-looking economy and strategic investment hub in the region.
- Cabinet approved the amendment to Statutory Instrument No. 19 of 2025 to allow for the axle tax to be \$30 per axle for foreign cargo trucks and trailers, and \$0 for local, domestic trucks. In addition, Cabinet authorized the Ministry of Transportation to institute a registry to identify the national origin of the cargo trucks traversing border points.

- Having taken note of the Authorization of the CARICOM Heads of Government for Belize to pursue full free movement of nationals under the enhanced cooperation with Barbados, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Cabinet gave its approval for the required legislation to be drafted to give effect to this authorization. In addition, Cabinet requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to work with the relevant ministries to implement the arrangement once all necessary requirements are met.
- Finally, Cabinet reminds all Belizeans to prepare emergency kits and review family plans this hurricane season.

Ends