

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, November 25, 2021

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT AND NROCC SIGN MOU FOR LARGE-SCALE TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME RELATED TO THE MONTEGO BAY PERIMETER ROAD PROJECT

The Forestry Department and the National Road Operating and Constructing Company (NROCC), on Tuesday November 23, 2021, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to reforest land in St. James to restore tree cover that may be affected during the construction of the greatly anticipated Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project. The reforestation agreement, represents a proactive approach by NROCC to begin the process of restoring tree cover even before any roadwork has commenced.

“NROCC is committed to developing sustainable and resilient infrastructure in an environmentally responsible manner where the total life-cycle of a roadway and its possible long-term effects are taken into account during the planning phase of the project. This monumental MOU creates a framework that will ensure there is no net loss of tree cover when the Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project comes to fruition,” said Mr. Stephen Edwards – Managing Director of NROCC.

This effort will ensure that the impact on the 62.5 hectares of forest due to the road construction is mitigated through phased reforestation, with NROCC providing the lands for replanting while the Forestry Department will provide tree seedlings and technical expertise to guide the planting and maintenance activities.

Mr. Ainsley A. Henry, CEO & Conservator of Forests believes reforestation exercises redound to the benefit of all Jamaicans. *“Recognizing that unfortunately Jamaica will lose tree cover due to the infrastructure development/roadworks, the Agency is pleased that NROCC is taking proactive steps to restore tree cover and I encourage this sort of approach to development planning and project execution. The tree cover to be established will undoubtedly lead to the regeneration of ecosystems and offer havens for biodiversity.”* he said.

Major components of the Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project include a 15-kilometers Montego Bay bypass road from Ironshore to Bogue Road, and the Long Hill bypass which involves the construction of approximately 11 kilometers of highway from Montego Bay to Montpelier.

This tree planting programme is the latest partnership between the Forestry Department and NROCC which has been working to add trees along the North-South and Highway 2000 roadways. Earlier this year, the road company started this effort by planting trees on land adjacent to a section of the North South Highway in support of the National Tree Planting Initiative and to offset tree losses from previous projects.