

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY: ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE R.N.L.I. AND THE JERSEY GOVERNMENT WHICH LED TO THE REMOVAL OF THE ALL WEATHER LIFEBOAT**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 21st February 2018  
by Senator S.C. Ferguson**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## **PROPOSITION**

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –**

- (a) to agree that a Committee of Inquiry should be established in accordance with Standing Order 146 to inquire into the circumstances leading to the formation of the J.L.A., in order to investigate the actions taken by the R.N.L.I. and the Jersey Government which led to the removal of the All Weather Lifeboat; and
- (b) to request the Chief Minister to take the necessary steps to select a suitable Chairman and members to undertake the Inquiry and to bring forward to the States for approval the necessary proposition relating to their appointment and the approval of detailed terms of reference for the Inquiry.

SENATOR S.C. FERGUSON

## REPORT

The Jersey Lifeboat Association (“J.L.A.”) have been excluded from the above investigation by States of Jersey/Ports of Jersey (“SoJ/PoJ”) on the basis that these matters pre-date their existence.

When the investigation was announced, the J.L.A. asked legitimate questions concerning funding, data protection, structure, rationale behind its short time-frame, ultimate use, independence, etc. Rather than receiving comprehensive responses, we were advised – “I am grateful for your interest in this matter however this exercise focusses on past events which pre-date the J.L.A.”

There are 3 parties to the dispute that the review covers: SoJ/PoJ, R.N.L.I., and the former St. Helier Crew (now J.L.A. crew). The investigation was organised by one party, SoJ/PoJ, endorsed by the R.N.L.I., and the third party were given just 6 days’ notice if they wished to give evidence.

The “independent” party chosen is the Guernsey Harbourmaster. To undertake his role in respect of Guernsey co-ordinator of search and rescue responsibilities in the Channel Islands area, he needs to maintain good working relationships with both SoJ/PoJ and the R.N.L.I. This is a pre-requisite of his Guernsey taxpayer-funded role.

The politician behind the review is Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin, who does not have any ministerial responsibility in this area. The Deputy of St. Martin is probably the most conflicted politician of all 49 States Assembly Members to be involved in this matter, due to his strong links with the R.N.L.I. On Radio Jersey, the Deputy admitted that it is a report commissioned for the J.L.A. petition debate in the Jersey States Assembly.

The Jersey Lifeboat Association believe that a properly constituted independent Committee of Inquiry is the only way to draw a line under the events that led to the formation of the J.L.A. This should include investigation into the collusion between the R.N.L.I. and the Jersey Government in the removal of the lifeboat.

The J.L.A. also questions whether Guernsey should be interfering in a domestic political matter, and whether the Guernsey taxpayer should be funding the inquiry.

In 2017, Senator P.F. Routier, the Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister, promised a proper independent review. Instead, we get a review which has been designed around a political agenda, one which is more likely to inflame matters than find a solution. The perpetrators of this report do not want a fully independent report, as they know that once the Public know the truth, the support for their Jersey Lifeboat Association will escalate.

The Chairman of the J.L.A. has already said that: “The J.L.A. has substantial backing and has an army of volunteers. Our exciting plans will be revealed over coming weeks. The future is very positive for the J.L.A., and therefore for all Islanders. It is a pity that the Government’s political games continue to provide an unnecessary distraction.”

The J.L.A. is preparing a dossier, which will be supplied to States Members before the debate on the petition, covering the history of the events leading to the setting-up of the independent J.L.A.

### **Financial and manpower implications**

The financial implications would entail the cost of an independent review panel. The manpower implications would entail the secretarial support for the review.