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WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2012

Question

Does the Minister consider that, in most instances, moving seaweed from the high water mark to lower down the beach serves little purpose and, if so, why does his Department continue doing it?

What alternative processes, if any, is he currently considering for dealing with beach seaweed and does that include incineration?

Answer

The Department's cleaning regime is such that seaweed is normally only cleaned after a 'spring tide' so each day the high tide mark is lower than the day before, reducing the result of newly deposited seaweed at the top of the beach. The Department only does this type of seaweed removal when it is absolutely necessarily and then only for the 'top' of the beach.

The degree of effectiveness of moving the seaweed down to the low water line is, to a large extent, dependant on the tides and weather. It is not possible to say how much of the seaweed deposited at low tide actually comes back up the beach but some inevitably does return. However, if the seaweed is left too long at the top of the beach, especially in warm weather, it starts to smell and rot and by reintroducing it into the sea it seems to refresh it and reduces the problem.

Due to the exceptional amount of seaweed that was deposited on the shore this summer, I have tasked Officers with reviewing the existing beach cleaning operation and look at alternative options for dealing with seaweed in 2013. This report is due to be completed by the end of 2012.

With regards to incineration it is unlikely that this will be viable option due to the fact that in order to process the seaweed in the EFW it would need to be dried, and the sand removed, and could only be taken in very small quantities and mixed with higher calorific value material as seaweed itself is mostly water so will have a very low calorific value. If too much seaweed was sent to the EFW there is a risk of difficulties in maintaining proper combustion which could lead to emission breaches, loss of electrical production, and increase of fuel oil and chemical usage.