



Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

18th May 2021

Mrs Camille Robinson-Regis, MP
Chairman
Joint Select Committee
Constitution (Amendment) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill 2020
Parliamentary Complex
Cabildo Building
St Vincent Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Mrs Robinson-Regis

Request for Comments on The Constitution (Amendment) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill and The Tobago Island Government Bill

On behalf of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (“the Commission”), I am pleased to submit the following comments for consideration.

1. At present, in accordance with Section 4 of the Elections and Boundaries (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Act, Chapter 25:50, the Commission is required to define and review the boundaries of the electoral districts of the electoral area of Tobago and must submit same to the Minister (in this instance, the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government). Thereafter, the Report is laid in Parliament and once passed forms the basis for the conduct of any Tobago House of Assembly Election. Would this procedure still apply, since the proposed Tobago Island Administration Bill, 2021 would establish a “Tobago Legislature”?
2. The Constitution (Amendment) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill, 2020 at Section 141B, describes the fifteen electoral districts to be established in Tobago as follows:

“The House of Assembly shall consist of:

- (a) *fifteen Assemblymen elected at an election held in accordance with the Representation of the People Act and who are qualified to be electors under section 12 of the Representation of the People Act, or such other number of Assemblymen as corresponds with the number of electoral districts as provided for by an Order made by the President.”*

However, Part III of the Second Column of the First Schedule to the Elections and Boundaries (Local Government and Tobago House of Assembly) Act, 2020 has **fixed** the number of electoral districts at fifteen (15) as follows:

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“Tobago is divided into the fifteen electoral districts mentioned in the third column of Part II of the First Schedule.”

This is again repeated within the Second Schedule at item 2(2) which states as follows: *“There shall be fifteen electoral districts in the electoral area of Tobago.”*

Any change to the number of electoral districts would require an amendment to that Act. Therefore, we were not certain as to the reason for the inclusion of such a provision in this Bill.

The above inconsistencies are therefore brought to your attention.

The Commission thanks you for the opportunity to present its comments.

Yours faithfully


Fern Narcis-Scope (Mrs)
Chief Election Officer