



Mikael Phillips Sounds Alarm on JUTC Collapse; Renews Call for National Transport Strategy

Kingston, Jamaica. May 28, 2025: Opposition Spokesman on Transport, Mikael Phillips, has issued a blistering critique of the Government's handling of the public transportation sector, warning that the Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC) is now in its worst financial and operational state in history.

In his Sectoral Debate presentation to Parliament yesterday, Phillips laid out a sobering picture of a system in decline. Between 2016 and 2024, the number of passengers carried by the JUTC fell from 63 million to just 18 million. Over the same period, operational cost recovery plummeted from 70% to 12%, while farebox revenue dropped from \$4.5 billion to \$1.4 billion. Despite a massive \$11 billion government subsidy, the JUTC is projected to lose \$13 billion this year alone.

"If Jamaica had properly invested those taxpayer dollars, we would have a first-class public transport system," Phillips stated. "Instead, productivity is low, public frustration is high, and the national happiness index reflects that reality. This government has failed the transportation sector and, by extension, the people of Jamaica."

Phillips pointed to the government's failure to produce a national transportation strategy as a major factor in the sector's decline. He criticised the administration for cycling through four different Ministers of Transport without delivering a single long-term solution for the nearly one million Jamaicans who depend on public transportation daily.

The Opposition Spokesman also questioned major inconsistencies in the budget. He demanded answers from the Minister of Transport regarding:

1. A \$1.8 billion increase in salaries at the JUTC, rising from \$4.32 billion to \$6.12 billion;
2. A \$414 million increase in toll charges, jumping from \$194 million to \$608 million.

These figures raise red flags, especially when considered alongside the steady reduction in the daily bus run-out, from 450 buses in 2016 to just 203 in 2024.



Adding to the concerns is what Phillips described as “CNG bus chaos.” Of the 200 buses currently in operation, 127 are CNG-powered. Yet, there is only one fuelling station, in Portmore, even though many of these buses operate out of depots in Spanish Town and Rockfort.

“With 70 more CNG buses scheduled to arrive in July, where exactly will they be refuelled?” Phillips asked. “This is yet another example of poor planning and administrative failure.”

The PNP is again calling for the urgent development and implementation of a comprehensive national transportation strategy. This plan must include:

- A full audit and overhaul of JUTC operations;
- Integration of the over 100,000 informal operators into a modern, unified system;
- Strategic investment in infrastructure to support energy-efficient and sustainable transport.

“The Government must act now, not later, to rescue the JUTC and restore dignity to our public transport system,” Phillips concluded.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Mikael Phillips, MP

Opposition Spokesperson on Transport and Mining

PNP Media Unit - Tel: 876-408-3160