



## **Phillips Outlines PNP's Plan to Formalise Taxi Sector, Launch Franchise Framework**

**Kingston, Jamaica. May 30, 2025:** Opposition Spokesman on Transport, Mikael Phillips, has unveiled a comprehensive plan to restructure Jamaica's taxi industry, aiming to transform route taxi and hackney carriage operators from informal service providers into fully integrated partners in national development.

Speaking during his Sectoral Debate presentation on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, Phillips called for an end to the current patchwork approach to taxi regulation and proposed a national franchise framework that would bring structure, accountability, and opportunity to the sector.

"For too long, our taxi operators have worked without clear direction, proper support, or real inclusion in national transport planning," said Phillips. "They move thousands of Jamaicans daily, especially in areas where the JUTC cannot reach. It's time we stop treating them as outliers and start treating them as partners."

### **Key Features of the Proposed Taxi Franchise Reform:**

1. **Tiered Franchising System:** A zonal franchise model that prioritises underserved routes, gives operators secure rights to corridors, and reduces overlap with JUTC services.
2. **Digital Registry & Rider Access Tools:** A centralised Transport Authority database with app/SMS access for commuters to verify driver information, submit feedback, and increase safety and transparency.
3. **Taxi Modernisation Grants & Loans:** A new facility, developed in partnership with the DBJ and private lenders, to provide tax breaks, fuel concessions, low-interest loans, and partial grants for operators upgrading vehicles within the franchise system.
4. **Designated Taxi Zones & Hubs:** Collaboration with municipal corporations to build structured, dignified taxi stands in commercial centres and transport hubs to reduce congestion and improve efficiency.



5. **Professional Certification & Training:** A National Taxi Operator Training & Certification Programme focusing on customer service, defensive driving, and conflict resolution. Franchise-certified drivers will wear visible ID badges.
6. **Smart Fare Integration:** Introduction of pilot prepaid fare cards usable across both JUTC and franchise taxis to support seamless mobility and improve revenue tracking.

Phillips also highlighted the broader impact this plan could have on easing pressure on the JUTC, improving commuter safety, and expanding public transport access, particularly in rural and underserved areas. “This government has had nine years to organise this sector and has failed. What we’re offering is not just policy, it’s partnership. Within our first 100 days, we will begin consultations and pilot projects to bring order, dignity, and investment to the taxi sector.”

The PNP’s plans are rooted in realism and respect, recognising that while challenges exist, vilifying taxi operators only deepens the problem. “Let’s stop pointing fingers and start building a system that works for the drivers, for the commuters, and for the country.”

-30-

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