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West end water supply improvements outlined by Minister Burgess

By Chris Spencer

A recently approved Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Works and Engineering (W&E), Watlington Waterworks Ltd. and Bermuda Waterworks Ltd will provide western parishes with greater water capacity.

That is according to Derrick Burgess Minister of Works and Engineering who was speaking to the House of Assembly on Friday.

“This Memorandum of Understanding will have a positive impact on the west end water supply,” said Mr. Burgess. “Additional water capacity will be available to west end users once interconnection between the Government and Bermuda Waterworks Limited systems is realised later this year.”

Presently W&E operates a water supply and distribution system in Southampton and Sandys with 122 properties receiving water. According to Mr. Burgess the western parishes have had to be put on water rations during particularly dry periods in the past. In 2007, W&E entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the West End Development Corporation (WEDCO) to supply water to W&E customers between Dockyard and Watford Bridge. But due to increased demand from the cruise ships and expansion in Dockyard WEDCO has not always been able to meet the demand.

Now, to meet WEDCO's current need and to provide additional capacity, WEDCO has expanded its water production from 120,000 gallons per day to 225,000 gallons per day.

"This additional capacity is likely to meet the current demand in this area, but is insufficient to meet the future demand of the western parishes," said Mr. Burgess. "The Ministry of Works and Engineering has received a proposal from the Bermuda Waterworks Limited for a phased transfer of all operations in the western parishes from the Ministry of W&E to Bermuda Waterworks Limited. That proposal, accepted by Government, has now been enshrined in a Memorandum of Understanding between W&E, Watlington Waterworks and Bermuda Waterworks Limited."

The supply of water to the western parishes will be completed in approximately five stages. The first stage of the project will involve the installation of a water pipeline to the Government reservoir at Tudor Hill — similar to the connection being used for the central parish water supply.

During the second stage of development the pipeline will be extended to Somerset Bridge via Middle Road. Stage three will see the pipeline stretched across Somerset Bridge to Somerset Village. With the completion of stage four, the pipeline will run in a loop through East Shore Road, Sound View Road and then Back to Somerset Road.

The fifth and final stage of the Memorandum of Understanding involves entering into an agreement with W&E for the sale of all water production, storage, supply and distribution in the western parishes.

Upon the completion of the project all operation will be

transferred from Government to Bermuda Waterworks Ltd. — a private company. Because there are no controls over the price of water in Bermuda both entities agree that a Water Commission should be established to regulate the production, sale and fair pricing of water.

"Honourable Members may be assured that the people of Bermuda will be kept abreast of all developments with respect to the expansion of Bermuda Waterworks Limited services in the west end of the Island," concluded Mr. Burgess.