

Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Noel Arscott, says that all options will be explored to ensure efficiency in the collection and disposal of solid waste islandwide during the 2013/2014 financial year.

He said that a submission is being prepared for Cabinet's approval in this regard.

"I, however, want the country to understand that there is a correlation between the payment of property taxes and the quality of service delivery and urge all of us to be more compliant in paying our property taxes while the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) improves efficiency," he said.

The Minister was responding to questions posed by Member of Parliament for West Kingston, Desmond McKenzie, in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, March 12, regarding the operations of the agency.

He said the NSWMA was facing a number of challenges, which were affecting the frequency of garbage collection. He said there were budgetary constraints, while six of the 15 disposal trucks needed to be repaired.

Mr. Arscott said one unit was acquired in 2012 by way of a joint venture between the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) and the NSWMA.

Turning to post Hurricane Sandy activities, the Minister explained that 109 private contractors were employed to undertake clean-up work, with \$50 million paid out to date. The types of equipment contracted were front end loaders, tractors, backhoes, grabbers, tipper trucks, compactors and chainsaws.

"There are outstanding bills of approximately \$30 million," Mr. Arscott said.

By Latonya Linton, JIS Reporter