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Dust Solution for Catalan Bay

Government has closely monitored the dust problem at Catalan Bay beach following the unacceptable situation that resulted last summer. The results to date of the analyses undertaken confirm that the dust problem originates from the use of dredged sand following the beach replenishment work undertaken at this beach some years back by the previous administration. Samples of sand have been taken at different depths in various locations throughout the winter period and these indicate a very significant reduction in the amounts of fine particles, which is the portion that becomes airborne and caused the dust clouds experienced last year.

The frequency and intensity of the storms experienced this winter has resulted in a thorough natural cleaning of the sand at this beach, to the extent, that the amount of fine particles present is now less than what naturally exists on most beaches. Although the monitoring programme will continue right up to the start of the bathing season, there is every confidence that there will not be a repetition of this problem this year. It is the policy of the Government to once again monitor the situation this year after summer to be able to take whatever action may be necessary in the future.

In the light of the above, the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport & the Port, Neil Costa MP said: "The decision was taken to set up a monitoring programme to assess and quantify the problem and also set about identifying a solution to effectively clean the sand via the use of a technique known as soil washing.

An inter-ministerial group was set up, consisting of the Ministers with responsibility for tourism, the environment and technical services, with officials, to steer this. As it happens, Mother Nature has thankfully done the work for us and I am assured by my technical advisors that the level of dust remaining is now well below what would naturally be occurring on any beach."

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