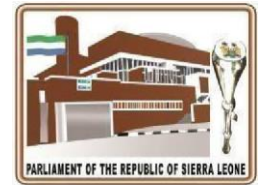




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3<sup>rd</sup> AUGUST, 2022

**PRESS RELEASE**



**PARLIAMENT DEBATES THE GUMA VALLEY WATER COMPANY ACT, 2021**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Wednesday 03/08/2022 intensively debated the bill entitled "The Guma Valley Water Company Act, 2021", for the development of Sierra Leone.

The Bill seeks to repeal and replace the Guma Valley Water Company Act, 2017 (Act. No.6 of 2017), to provide for the transfer of authority and control over the Guma Valley Water Company from the National Commission for Privatisation to the Ministry of Water Resources, to provide for the sustainable supply of water for public and private purposes and to provide for other related matters.

Presenting the Bill, the Minister of Water Resources, Ing. Philip K. Lansana said the bill is to repeal and replace the Guma Valley Water Company Act of 2017 and went on to highlight the

composition of the proposed board and underscored the functions and responsibility of Guma Valley Water Company towards water supply in the country.

He said in light of the water sector, the company would work with other private water companies to supply water to the nation. He also said the company would seek to acquire lands for its purposeful use.

In his submission to the debates, the Parliamentary Chairman of the Water Resources Committee, Hon Lahai Marrah said he has been calling the minister to table bills relating to water resources and commended him for presenting the bill before the House for consideration. The MP urged the minister to do more for the development of the nation.

He called on his colleague's MPs to support the bill and went on to highlight the intention of the privatization of Guma. He said although Guma Valley is trying to supply water in the country, but said there are challenges. He said Guma needs \$ US 1.2 Million to adequately supply water in the Country, and reiterated the challenges affecting the old Guma dam facility. He urged the government to disburse resources in actualizing the company's operations. "Water is a political commodity", he asserted.

The Honorable Member reminded MPs of a statement made by the President in his 2019 Presidential Address to Parliament to remove Guma Valley from the list of the National Commission for Privatization. He said the document is not "controversial" and urged his colleague MPs to speedy enact the Bill into law.

On his part, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh commended Hon. Lahai Marrah for commending the bill before the House, and underscored the importance of Guma Valley and went on to give statistical data on revenue collection from 2019-2021 and noted that, Guma is a Viable entity in terms of revenue generations.

The MP stated that, lot of MDA's are in default to Guma valley relative to water payment and called on Parliament to ask the Finance Ministry to collect budgetary allocation from MDA's and transferred it to Guma's account for lack of payment of water rate.

Hon. Kadie Davies supported the passage of the bill and noted that water is life. She called on Guma Valley officials to engage her community in the said proposed construction of a new Guma dam for the city, in her constituency.

Hon. Abdul Muniru Lansana highlighted the challenges of water supply in the eastern part of the country and went on to commend the Guma Valley Water Company for supplying water in the east end of Freetown. He also advised the company to do the needful, to ensure the supply of water in the country.

In rounding up the debate, the Acting Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Hassan Sesay said the bill is long overdue. He also commended the Bill for injecting a public-private partnership agreement.

He criticized citizens for cutting down Guma water pipes and emphasized the need for the payments of Guma arrears by Ministries, Department, and Agencies (MDA). He called on MPs to speedily enact the bill into law.

In concluding the debate, the Acting Leader of Government Business Hon. Bashiru Silkie commended MPs for their contributions to the debate and praised the Minister for bringing the Bill to Parliament, whilst assuring all of the positivity. He advised Guma to have a good working relationship with the Sierra Leone Road Authority (SLRA), relative to the latter's water pipes and construction of the road.

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