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New Draft Legislation Seeks to Strengthen Power of Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission Chief

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Bill to formally empower the head of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Draft legislation will be brought to the Senate at the end of the month to formally empower the head of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission, the Consortium has learned.

Consortium journalists spoke with Langley Shazor, legislative director in the office of Senator Angel Bolques Jr., who confirmed that Bill 35-0036 will be introduced by the senator and reviewed by the Committee on Government Operations, Veteran Affairs and Consumer Protection when it meets at the end of the month.

The legislation seeks to amend the section of the Virgin Islands Code which deals with the Commission, in order to provide the office of the Executive Director with the explicit administrative power to manage the duties and responsibilities of the Commission, ensuring that the leadership role carries the necessary authority for progressive action.

Shazor says that Sen. Bolques and his colleagues understand that an overly-powerful Board may have, over time, usurped some of the authority from the Executive Director's office, sapping the position of the power it needs for the person occupying the post to function effectively. This legislation, he says, seeks to fix that issue by addressing operational deficiencies within the Commission. This, Shazor argues, will benefit the entire territory as well as the taxi sector.

"We're trying to make sure that whoever sits in this position has the authority to move the Taxicab Commission forward," said Shazor. "How do we address the deficiencies and how do we ensure that the Taxicab Commission can move forward to best service the entire territory and all the taxi men and women who work under their umbrella?"

The bill comes after a [lengthy closure](#) of the Commission's offices on St. Thomas, which exacerbated an already deteriorating relationship between the Commission and its members, and prompted a May 8 [meeting](#) among industry stakeholders jointly convened by Senators Bolques and Donna Frett-Gregory. The meeting was attended by taxi drivers, Commission Executive Director Vernice Gumbs, officials from other government agencies, and several other legislators.

Bolques expressed his commitment to continue his efforts, legislatively and otherwise, to get the Taxicab Commission functioning in an effective manner for an industry crucial to the territory. "As individual legislators, and as a body, we want to do everything within our power to assist agencies and organizations in moving forward and serving the people of the USVI," he said.