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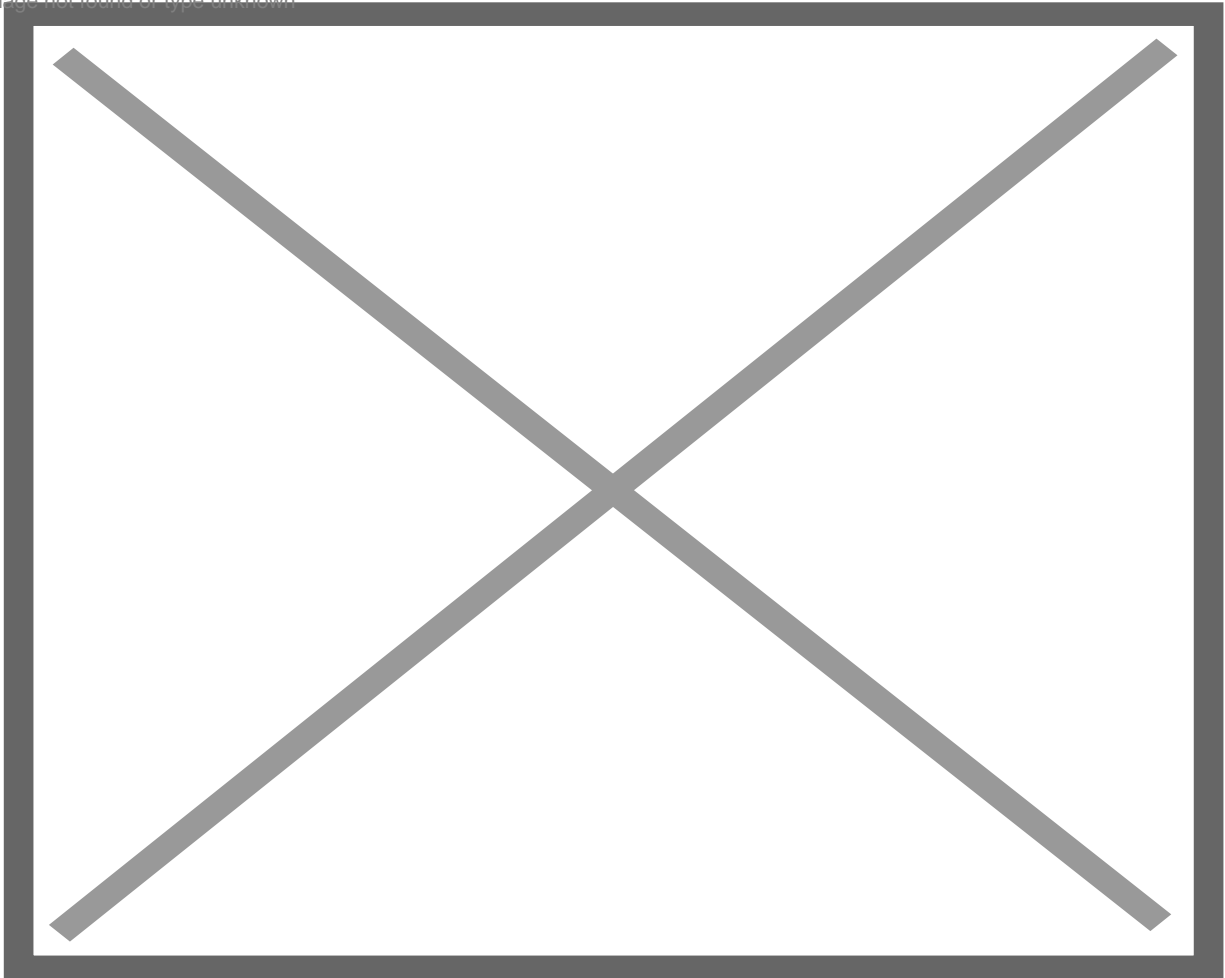
Bryan Vetoes Measure on WAPA Water Bill Abatement, Acts on Other Legislation

Governor Bryan rejects proposed monthly abatement for water bills"

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr.

Governor Albert Bryan on Thursday announced decisions on legislation passed by the 35th Legislature in its November session, including vetoing a key bill that sought to mandate monthly water bill abatements by the V.I. Water and Power Authority.

Among the actions taken, Mr. Bryan vetoed Bill No. 35-0200, which required WAPA to provide a six-month water bill abatement to residential customers in areas affected by unsatisfactory levels of lead and copper. He expressed concerns about the bill's broad scope, potential violation of WAPA's obligations to its lenders, and the creation of an unfunded mandate. "While I understand

the intent of this measure to provide relief for impacted residents, this proposed solution is overbroad, may violate WAPA's obligations to its lenders, and would result in an unfunded mandate," the governor stated. Instead, he proposed a flat bill credit for six months, calculated based on the recommended flushing of taps — five minutes, three times per day, at an estimate cost of \$25 per customer per month in the affected areas.

Mr. Bryan also vetoed Bill No. 35-0014, which sought to honor Wayne "Facts Man" Adams by naming a bridge after him. In his statement, the Governor respected Mr. Adams's contributions but questioned the appropriateness of this recognition. He cited the tradition of naming public structures after notable elected officials and renowned public servants, such as Ambassador Terrence A. Todman and Senator Sidney Lee.

"The naming of roads, buildings, and bridges has typically been reserved for notable elected officials and renown public servants. For example, in St. Thomas the airport entrance road was renamed honoring and commending the late Ambassador Terrence A. Todman. Ambassador Todman was recognized for his outstanding diplomatic service to the United States. Additionally, a road in St. Croix was named after four-term Senator Sidney Lee, who served as Vice President of the 13th Legislature and chairman of the Finance Committee. He subsequently served many terms on Virgin Islands boards, and was a philanthropist, businessman, and scientist. Equating these contributions to that of our beloved Mr. Adams does a disservice to those we have honored and will honor in the future," Mr. Bryan shared.

In addition to these vetoes, the governor approved several bills, including:

- Bill No. 35-0048, requiring the GERS to send annual reports to members.
- Bill No. 35-0074, honoring former Senator Almando "Rocky" Liburd and renaming a road in St. John after him.
- Bill No. 35-0180, appropriating funds for the construction of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium Project.
- Bill No. 35-0190, allocating funds for bottled drinking water in areas impacted by elevated levels of copper and lead.
- Bill No. 35-0191, appropriating funds for the dredging of the Charlotte Amalie Harbor.
- Bills related to lease agreements with Inter-Island Auto Group, LLC, and Roncan, Inc.

Furthermore, Governor Bryan acknowledged the Legislature's favorable action on several nominations and the override of his veto of Bill No. 35-0082. He also recognized Resolution No. 1908, honoring basketball player Aliyah Boston for her contributions to sports and awarding her the Key to the Territory.