

# Finance Commissioner Nominee Can't Confirm Budget Readiness Amid Vendor Payment Concerns

**Financial management challenges emerge during confirmation hearing for finance commissioner**

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Ernice Gilbert **December 08, 2023**

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During a Senate Committee on Rules and Judiciary confirmation hearing, Kevin McCurdy, the nominee for Commissioner of the Department of Finance, admitted uncertainty regarding the availability of Fiscal Year 2024 budgets for various government departments and agencies.

Asked by Senator Donna Frett-Gregory whether all budgets for Fiscal Year 2024 had been "loaded and available for the departments and agencies to expend, obligate etc.," Mr. McCurdy initially deferred responsibility to the Office of Management and Budget but later conceded, "I can't say that with 100 percent certainty. I just don't want to lie to you and say yes." Unsatisfied with his response, Ms. Frett-Gregory stated, "You need to know, you need to know."

This admission came amidst discussions on the Department of Finance's ongoing challenges, particularly relating to vendor payments and cash management. Addressing Senator Angel Bolques Jr., Mr. McCurdy acknowledged the urgency of resolving long-standing vendor payment delays, stating, "It's not lost on me...we need to find a way to better manage our cash and reduce that long lag time in getting vendor payments out."

Mr. McCurdy highlighted a fundamental issue within the department: "Collections are seasonal, and bills are constant." He stressed the need for department officials to bridge the gap between fluctuating collections and consistent bill payments. He also addressed concerns raised by Senator Kenneth Gittens about reports of checks being cut but not delivered to vendors. Mr. McCurdy speculated that these delays might be linked to federal funds and the need for departments and agencies to complete their draws before releasing checks.

Senator Carla Joseph inquired about specific strategies to tackle the chronic issue of delayed payments to vendors. Mr. McCurdy responded that discussions with banking partners were ongoing to find a solution for balancing cash inflows and outflows, but no definitive resolution had been reached.

In his testimony, Mr. McCurdy emphasized the importance of accountability within the Department of Finance. He observed that, as a small community, "we sometimes don't always follow our own policies and procedures. And I think that is something we need to get better at."

The commissioner nominee's comments at the hearing come two days after the Consortium [brought to the fore layoffs at the V.I. Dept. of Tourism](#) because the department's fiscal year 2024 budget had not been made available to it. But D.O.T. isn't the only government arm suffering because of budgetary constraints. Several departments and agencies had yet to receive their 2024 allocation three months into the new budget cycle, according to government officials with knowledge of the matter.