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Governor Bryan Nominates Gordon Rhea as USVI's New Attorney General

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. selects Gordon Rhea, a lawyer with extensive experience in criminal defense and environmental litigation, as the territory's top legal officer

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Attorney Gordon Rhea

On Monday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. held his second press conference of the day where he confirmed what had been whispered for the last week or so — the nomination of Gordon Rhea as the territory's next attorney general.

“Attorney Rhea brings to this role a wealth of experience and a proven record of service and legal acumen that is simply unparalleled,” Governor Bryan said, listing Mr. Rhea's academic

credentials from Indiana University, Harvard University and Stanford Law School. The governor pointed to Rhea's experience as a criminal defense attorney in Los Angeles during his early career and his work in Washington D.C. in the legal offices of the Senate Select committee on Intelligence Activities as evidence for his fitness for the task at hand. So does his over 40-years of practice in the Virgin Islands first as assistant U.S. Attorney, and then in private practice.

“His firm tackled some of the most challenging cases our community has faced, including landmark litigation against major industrial giants over toxic exposures, and environmental damages, actions that have safeguarded our workforce and our natural resources for decades. His work in the islands has been nothing short of transformative, achieving the largest civil jury verdict in our history, in a case pivotal to public health,” Governor Bryan said as he lauded Mr. Rhea's work in winning a historic judgment against [R.J. Reynolds](#) and settlements in cases against Hovensa, Lockheed Martin, Alcoa, and the owners of a local alumina refinery.

In brief remarks, Mr. Rhea said that he was “excited” about the prospect of taking on the job, after which Governor Bryan brushed off concerns of possible conflicts of interest arising from his nominee's previous work representing one of the defendants in the suit the Virgin Islands filed against the estate of Jeffrey Epstein. “He has the ability to recuse himself from any case where he feels that he may be in jeopardy” of a conflict, the governor said.

Mr. Bryan said he anticipated making some progress on spending some funds from that lawsuit that were earmarked for the Justice Department, provided that when confirmed, Mr. Rhea disagrees with his predecessor that legislative approval would be a prerequisite. Once placed under the control of the V.I. DOJ, “we could start doing some of the anti-trafficking initiation and policies that we want to put in place.”