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Senator Heyliger Challenges Governor Bryan's WAPA Funding Claims

Heyliger counters allegations of legislative negligence in funding WAPA

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Senator Alma Heyliger Francis By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

In a forceful rebuttal to Governor Albert Bryan's recent statements about funding for the V.I. Water and Power Authority, Senator Alma Francis Heyliger has issued a stern condemnation, accusing the governor of deceit and evasion of responsibility.

During a recent press briefing, Heyliger Francis said Governor Bryan accused the V.I. Legislature of failing to provide necessary funds to WAPA, attributing part of the utility's financial struggles to this shortfall. Mr. Bryan stated that the Legislature's actions of underfunding semi-autonomous

agencies forced those agencies to divert funds meant for utility bills to cover other expenses.

Contradicting the Mr. Bryan's claims, Francis Heyliger highlighted a "Single Payer Utility" line item in the budget, expressly set up to ensure that WAPA receives its due payments.

The senator argued that the governor's narrative misrepresents the Legislature's efforts and mismanages the fiscal resources of the territory. She criticized the governor's decision to use the "rainy day fund" to cover WAPA's debts, labeling it not only inappropriate but also unlawful, as such debts, she said, do not meet the legal criteria for emergency fund use.

Mr. Bryan told the Consortium after the press briefing that his office does not need the Senate's clearance to use the rainy day fund. "The law actually says all that needs to happen is that the Finance commissioner has to ask the Office of Management and Budget director, and then they release the funds. That's it," he said. [As of January](#), there was over \$20 million in the rainy day fund. Mr. Bryan said [he had sought to call the Senate into session](#) but opted to declare a state of emergency due to the urgency of the matter.

Adding to her critique, Francis Heyliger claimed that the governor had made unauthorized financial transfers, including a \$45 million transfer from the General Fund to WAPA and a \$25 million allocation for retroactive pay without legislative approval. These actions, she asserted, violate established protocols and undermine the principles of democratic governance.

In her concluding remarks, the senator said she is dedicated to transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility. She called on her legislative colleagues to hold the governor accountable for what she described as reckless financial practices.

The Senate will hold a [press conference today](#) to address the WAPA crisis.