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## Bryan Vetoes Street Naming for Mapp, Approves Critical WAPA and Meals on Wheels Funding

**Bryan cites budget concerns and legislators' opposition to \$200,000 aid for Hurricane Beryl victims; greenlights bills to modernize the electrical grid, enhance the meal program, and support community initiatives**

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**Governor Bryan, center, and former Governor Kenneth Mapp, left, during Mr. Bryan's inauguration ceremony in January 2019. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM**

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has forwarded a transmittal letter to the 35th Legislature communicating his actions on bills recently approved by lawmakers.

Among the actions, Mr. Bryan vetoed a bill that proposed naming a street after former Governor Kenneth Mapp. Bill No. 35-0229 aimed to honor the former governor by naming Route 75 the "Gov. Kenneth E. Mapp Highway" and appropriating \$45,000 from the General Fund for this purpose. In his letter to Senate President Novelle E. Francis Jr., Mr. Bryan acknowledged Mapp's contributions but argued against the expenditure, drawing contrast to [his plans to send \\$200,000](#) to individuals impacted by Hurricane Beryl in Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and being chastised by lawmakers who vehemently opposed the decision.

"As a Governor I recognize Governor Mapp and his contribution to the Virgin Islands, however by contrast, the Legislature recently chastised the administration for attempting to assist over 100,000 people in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, and I am confident in your support for denying the expenditure of \$45,000 for the commemoration of a single person," he wrote. "As was expressed by the sentiment of the body, allocating this large sum for such a non-critical purpose is not appropriate at a time when we are facing a large budget deficit and declining revenue collections. I would encourage the Legislature to develop revenue-generating measures to alleviate the government's financial strain and provide funding for honors and other extraneous projects."

In other action, Mr. Bryan approved Bill No. 35-0311, mandating the V.I. Water and Power Authority to seek technical assistance from federal agencies such as the Department of Energy and the Army Corps of Engineers. The aim is to modernize WAPA's electrical grid and water systems, improve reliability, and incorporate advanced technologies. The governor noted that WAPA has already been working with several federal agencies and expressed confidence that these collaborations would yield positive results.

The territory's leader also approved Bill No. 35-0313, which appropriates \$100,000 to the V.I. Department of Human Services to provide meals to individuals on the waitlist for the Meals on Wheels program. However, he expressed concerns that the amount was insufficient to clear the 97-person waitlist and called for a sustainable funding source to support this initiative. Last month, DHS said it needed [\\$300,000 to clear the waiting list](#).

#### Other Measures Vetoed and Approved

Governor Bryan vetoed Bill No. 35-0269, which proposed penalties for perjury in legislative proceedings, citing a lack of due process protections. He suggested amendments to the existing perjury section of the Virgin Islands Criminal Code and recommended that related proceedings be prosecuted by the Department of Justice.

Other approvals include:

- Bill No. 35-0301: Requiring the government to bear the cost of forensic medical exams for victims of rape or unlawful sexual contact, regardless of victim cooperation with law enforcement or insurance status.
- Bill No. 35-0305: Appropriating \$1,000,000 for emergency grass and bush cutting on St. Croix.
- Bill No. 35-0310: Appropriating \$250,000 for the emergency restoration of electrical services in specific areas of St. Croix.
- Bill No. 35-0312: Providing funds for the maintenance and construction of Ivanna Eudora Kean High School track and field facilities.
- Bill No. 35-0314: Reprogramming funds for the Virgin Islands Little League District - Girls Softball.

The governor also acknowledged the Legislature's override of his vetoes on bills related to handgun training and [the Integrated Digital Experience Act](#) (IDEA), despite his concerns over funding sources and implementation timelines.

Elsewhere, the governor [congratulated](#) Judge Ernest Morris on his confirmation as Judge of the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, District of St. Croix, and Harith Wickrema on his confirmation as a Member of the Virgin Islands Conservation District representing St. John. He also acknowledged resolutions honoring [Willard John](#) and Miguel Santos Jr. for their contributions to the community.

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