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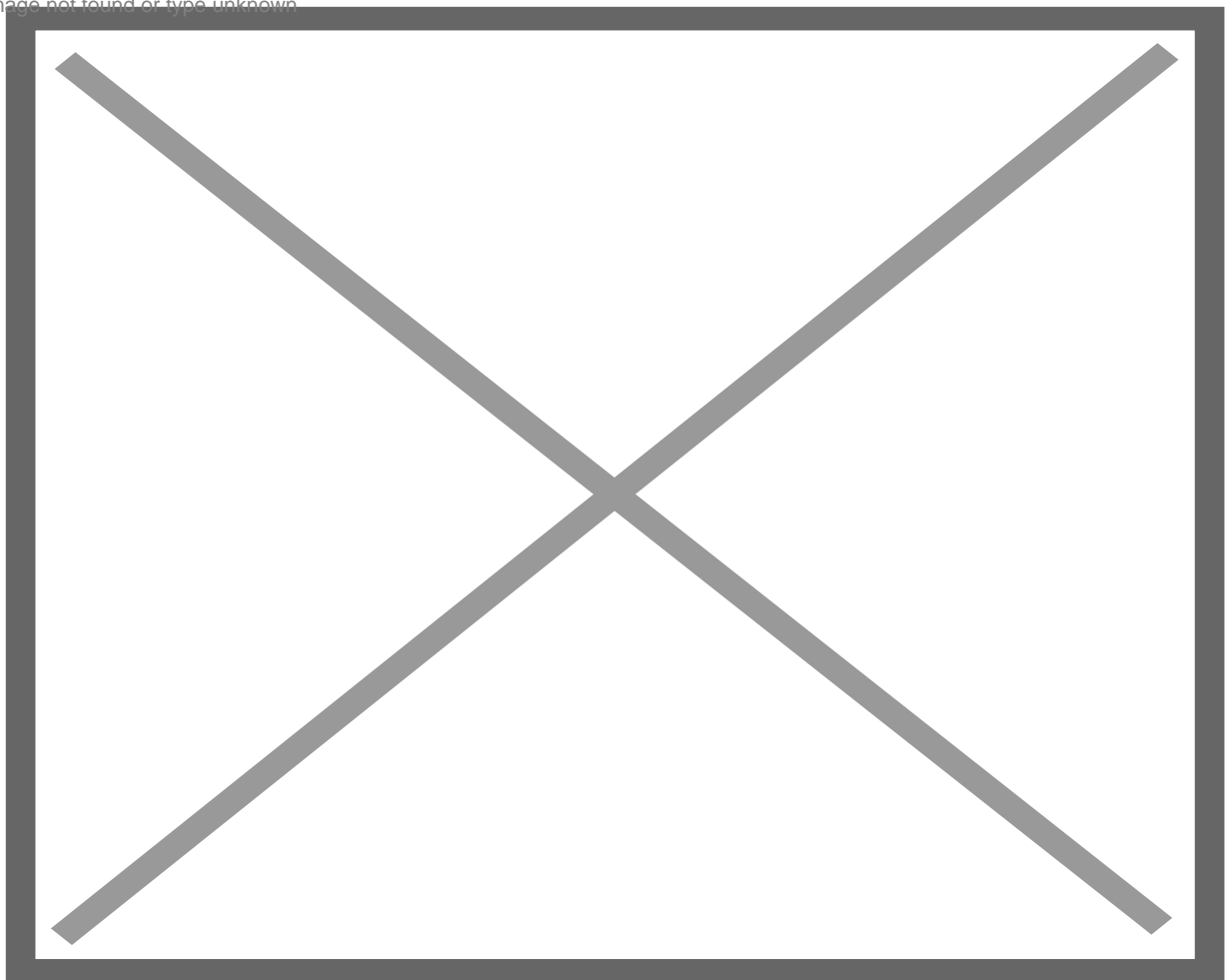
Johnson Criticizes Delays in Paul E. Joseph Stadium Construction

Johnson, who served as former Gov. Mapp's senior advisor during years of delays on the stadium, criticizes the project's stagnation ahead of Bryan's State of the Territory address tonight

Development / **Published On January 27, 2025 06:06 AM /**

Staff Consortium **January 27, 2025**

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Construction on the Paul E. Joseph Stadium in downtown Frederiksted.

As Virgin Islanders prepare to hear Governor Albert Bryan Jr. 's assessment of the state of the territory in Monday night's address, one lawmaker is highlighting a promise from the address two years ago that appears to have fallen by the wayside.

“The Paul E. Joseph Stadium in Frederiksted is also nearing completion,” said Governor Bryan in January 2023. However, according to Senator Franklin Johnson, a recent visit to the construction

site revealed “a near standstill” on the project, with “only two workers present” at the time of the visit.

Johnson noted that the legislature had, at the governor's request, duly appropriated [additional funding of over \\$5 million](#) in November 2023 to support the construction project. At the time, completion was anticipated by the end of 2024. Despite receiving the needed funds, progress on the stadium has remained slow and the work is still ongoing.

“This is beyond frustrating,” Mr. Johnson said in a press statement issued on Sunday. “We have a perfect opportunity to move St. Croix forward through sports tourism, but we can't get there if critical projects like the Paul E. Joseph Stadium are being neglected due to a lack of interest and follow-through by the administration.”

Construction on the stadium began during the final months of the de Jongh administration. When former Governor Kenneth Mapp took office in 2018, [he halted construction to expand the project's scope](#). However, by the end of his four years in office, little progress had been made. Under Governor Albert Bryan, work on the stadium has started and stopped for various reasons. Now, in Bryan's sixth year in office — and more than a decade since construction began — the project continues to progress at an extremely slow pace. Notably, Mr. Johnson served as a [senior policy advisor](#) to Governor Mapp.

According to Mr. Johnson, the years of delays at the stadium have cost St. Croix – and the territory in general – opportunities to host regional and international sporting events, boost the local economy, and create much-needed jobs. “The people of St. Croix deserve better,” Mr. Johnson added. “It's unacceptable to see such little progress, especially when the potential benefits for our island are so significant.”

Mr. Johnson described the lack of progress on the stadium reconstruction project as “an issue of accountability and leadership.” The current approach to site works is “failing,” he declared, calling for swift action in order to get the project back on track towards completion. The lawmaker promised to work with his colleagues to explore measures that can address efficiencies in project management, for this and other recovery projects in the territory.

“This project represents more than just a stadium,” Senator Johnson said. “It represents hope, opportunity, and a better future for St. Croix.” He vowed to continue holding parties accountable, and promise to spare no effort in ensuring that the Paul E. Joseph Stadium is finally completed despite the years of delay.