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"An Embarrassment, an Abomination, a Disgust": Lawmakers Subpoena Officials Over \$30M Stadium Debacle

With \$30 million already over a 10-year span and new funding request, senators were incensed by the no-show of key government officials at a hearing on the Paul E. Joseph Stadium, prompting subpoenas and calls for transparency, accountability, and respect

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Work performed on the Paul E. Joseph Stadium in May 2023. By. V.I. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Once again, lawmakers have resorted to issuing subpoenas to invited testifiers who failed to appear at a committee hearing. This time, the commissioners of the Departments of Public Works,

Property and Procurement, and Sports Parks and Recreation were no-shows before the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports and Parks. The leadership of contractor GEC, LLC also failed to appear. The topic of Wednesday's hearing was the status of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium.

In February, in response to the sluggish pace of construction at the site, committee chair Senator Angel Bolques Jr. suggested strengthening the territory's existing laws [governing liquidated damages](#). Wednesday's meeting was intended to provide answers.

Instead, the Senate received excuses. DSPR Acting Commissioner Vincent Roberts wrote to say that "I only received a copy of the memo outlining the details of the hearing this morning." DPP Commissioner Lisa Alejandro said that a "prior commitment" was responsible for her absence. Nobody could attend in her stead, she wrote, because "a project of this nature requires my direct participation." Legislators received no correspondence from DPW Commissioner Derek Gabriel or GEC representatives John Wessel and Tim Dempsey, explaining their absence.

Lawmakers were livid.

"For several months my office has worked on coordinating this hearing. Formal Invitations were sent or first issued on April 17, 2025," Bolques disclosed. According to him, the hearing's original date had been adjusted multiple times "to accommodate schedules and ensure broader participation."

"This lack of full engagement is unacceptable," he declared. "The people of the Virgin Islands have invested millions of dollars into this project and deserve answers regarding the progress, management, and accountability of this project."

"We cannot continue playing games with this because this is government money," agreed Senator Franklin Johnson. He remains [staunchly opposed](#) to pumping more funding into the stadium build.

"We need to stop playing these little ridiculous games. I think people are passively aggressive," suggested Senator Carla Joseph. Senator Novelle Francis, who said he left a funeral prematurely to attend the meeting, proposed that "people are embarrassed to come here."

"It's an embarrassment, it's an abomination, it's a disgust. \$30 million and we still can't show what's happening there," Mr. Francis lamented.

"I take no pleasure in having to do what we need to do next," said Senator Bolques before making several motions to subpoena the aforementioned government representatives. "It's unfortunate that this institution continues to be abused by the actions of the executive branch... The people of St. Croix deserve better."

With a legally binding directive to attend the next committee hearing, Commissioners Derek Gabriel, Lisa Alejandro, Vincent Roberts, John Wessel and Tim Dempsey are all expected to provide testimony on July 18th. Residents of the Virgin Islands will therefore have to wait one more month to learn why the stadium project continues to run into delays.