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Bryan Slams Outdated Permit Process After \$130M Summer's End Extension Blocked, Calls for Legislative Action to Match Pace of Global Economy

Gov. Bryan says outdated laws stopped a \$130M St. John project despite prior approvals, accusing lawmakers of clinging to half-century-old rules. Senate President Potter counters that the law is unambiguous and requires adherence to statutory deadlines.

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. is calling on the V.I. Legislature to update decades-old laws that he says are hindering private investment, delaying job creation, and preventing the territory from competing effectively in today's global economy.

In a release issued by Government House on Thursday, Mr. Bryan pointed to the Legislature's [recent refusal](#) to grant a two-year permit extension for the \$130 million Summer's End marina project on St. John as a clear example of how outdated procedures are obstructing economic progress. He stressed that the request was not for a new project or application, but simply for an extension.

Mr. Bryan's position on the [Summer's End matter](#) stands in sharp contrast to that of the Legislature, with Senate President Milton Potter maintaining that the body's stance is firmly grounded in law. "The law is unambiguous," [he said last week](#), citing Chapter 12 of the Virgin Islands Code, section 910. The statute requires that "any development or construction approved by a coastal zone permit shall be commenced within twelve months from the date such permit is issued. Failure to commence development or construction within such period shall cause the permit to lapse and render it null and void unless an extension is granted by the appropriate Committee of the Commission or the Commissioner."

Mr. Bryan, however, remains critical of the Senate's decision to vote down his request to approve Bill 36-0145, an act ratifying the governor's approval of the Modification and Extension of Consolidated Major Coastal Zone Management Permit Nos. CZJ-04-14 (W) and CZJ-03-14 (L).

"What we were dealing with was not a new application or a new project. It was a permit that had already been through every hurdle, every hearing and every approval process," he said on Thursday. "There were no changes, no modifications, nothing new to review. All that was required was a two-year extension so that a \$130 million private investment in St. John can proceed."

Mr. Bryan criticized Potter for defending the process that blocked the extension. "Once again, Senate President Potter has shown that he simply does not understand the urgency of moving the Virgin Islands forward," he said. "The Legislature continues to apply a process that was created nearly half a century ago to address today's challenges. That is neither progress nor leadership."

According to Bryan, the insistence on maintaining outdated practices has nothing to do with transparency and everything to do with a refusal to adapt. "The Legislature insists on dragging us through the same outdated, time-consuming procedures written in an era when there was no email, no internet, no artificial intelligence and certainly no appreciation for the pace at which opportunities can be lost in today's world," he said. "Even worse, the Legislature continues to hide behind 'past practice' and claims of transparency, when in truth this is about a failure to lead for the times and to embrace the tools and speed required to compete in today's global economy."

The governor warned that failure to modernize will leave Virgin Islanders at a disadvantage. "Things are moving faster than ever before. The global economy is not waiting for the Virgin Islands to catch up," he said. "We need leaders who respond to today's realities with today's tools, and policy that reflects the speed of modern progress. If we continue to govern by rules written for the last century, we will continue to lose the opportunities of this century."

"The people of the Virgin Islands deserve better," Bryan concluded.