

Legislature Closed on Wednesday as Acting Senate President Cautions Public About Severe Weather

Acting as both Senate President and Lieutenant Governor, Gittens said the NWS forecasts two to four inches of rain and gusty winds. He backed the government's decision to close schools and offices, urging residents to prepare and heed safety advisories.

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The V.I. Legislature building in St. Thomas. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

Senator Kenneth Gittens, who is currently serving as both Acting Senate President and Acting Lieutenant Governor, has announced that all Legislative offices will be closed on Wednesday as the territory braces for deteriorating weather conditions linked to an approaching tropical wave.

Gittens made the announcement Tuesday after attending a press briefing with Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) Director Daryl Jaschen. He later conferred with Acting Governor Tregenza Roach, agency heads from across the government, and a representative from the National Weather Service (NWS) in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

“Our Territory should expect conditions associated with a tropical wave beginning later this evening and continuing into tomorrow,” Sen. Gittens said. “Heavy rainfall is anticipated across the Territory.”

According to the NWS, St. Thomas may experience heavy showers beginning early Wednesday morning and lasting into the afternoon. St. Croix is forecast to see rainfall beginning in the early afternoon and continuing through the evening. Rainfall totals are projected between two to four inches, accompanied by gusty winds.

Citing the community’s recent difficulties with flooding from torrential rains just last week, Gittens voiced his support for the administration’s decision to close all public schools and government offices. “Given our community’s recent experience with torrential rain and flooding just last week, I fully support the Executive Branch’s decision to close all public schools and government offices tomorrow as a precautionary measure,” he said.

He also reminded residents that essential employees may still be required to report. “Essential employees are advised to contact their respective agency heads for guidance, as they may be required to report for critical services,” he said. Gittens stressed that while the announcement should not cause alarm, preparation is essential. “I want to stress, this is not a cause for alarm. This is about being prepared. The safety of our residents remains our top priority, and I applaud the proactive steps taken by Acting Governor Roach and our emergency response teams.”

The senator urged Virgin Islanders to stay informed through official updates. “Let’s continue to look out for one another and take the necessary steps to remain safe,” he concluded, encouraging residents to follow briefings from VITEMA and to heed all public safety advisories and alerts.