

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Lawmakers Confront \$20 Million in Vendor Bills Over 120 Days as Refund and Retro Pay Delays Persist

Finance officials told senators that 2023 tax refunds remain in progress and retroactive payments are still being reconciled, while approximately \$20 million in vendor obligations over 120 days continues to strain government relationships.

Government / **Published On February 28, 2026 08:09 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **February 28, 2026**



Several lawmakers on Friday pleaded with Governor Albert Bryan's financial team to expedite several categories of payments owed to the people of the Virgin Islands.

Delays in tax refund processing remain a persistent complaint from constituents. Senator Avery Lewis, for his part, noted that his phone has been “blowing up” with requests for information on the status of refunds.

He sought an answer from Finance Commissioner Kevin McCurdy on when taxpayers could expect to receive what is due to them.

Speaking frankly, Mr. McCurdy told lawmakers that more payments can only be processed “when cash allows us to do it.” Pressed by Sen. Lewis on when that may be, he replied, “hopefully in April, our big cash day.”

Senator Hubert Frederick urged expedience. “I know it's very difficult given our cash flow to say when, but this is a priority,” he told Mr. McCurdy.

“People saying you're asking us to pay you, but you can't pay us money that you owe, and that's not fair,” Senator Frederick added. “In six weeks, we're going to be asking them for a mandatory payment with penalties if they don't make it.”

According to Joel Lee, director of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, they are “still in the midst of paying 2023.”

“We're trying to figure out where we're going to get money from, but we're not paying either. So then it becomes cyclical and everyone starts to get frustrated,” said Frederick.

Tax returns aren't the only thing that Virgin Islanders have been clamoring for. Retroactive payments remain the albatross around the GVI's neck. Sen. Frederick characterized those payments as another of the government's “priority obligations.”

Cindy Richardson, director of the Division of Personnel, assured lawmakers that her office is managing a “master listing” of retroactive payments owed. “Right now, we are working towards reconciliation,” she explained, adding that “we have now prepared individual worksheets for each individual that we'll be further reconciling based on the various disbursements under the Bryan/Roach administration.”

Sen. Lewis encouraged the Division to work on clearing out smaller retroactive payments that are owed.

As has become customary when the financial team appears before the Legislature, lawmakers also inquired about outstanding vendor payments. According to Mr. McCurdy's testimony, the government “continues to prioritize the timely payment of vendors and obligations.”

Senator Franklin Johnson requested information on the number of vendors who have been owed payment for over 120 days, or approximately four months. While that figure was not immediately available, he learned from Commissioner McCurdy that the total outstanding amount over 120 days was approximately \$20 million. That includes federal dollars, he said.

Distressed by that revelation, Senator Johnson wondered whether vendors are denying services to the GVI because of payments owed. Mr. McCurdy admitted that it is a “continuous experience.”

He provided one example where a contractor was owed \$157 by one department but “refuses to do business with the government after other departments have paid thousands of dollars on time.”

“I am as perplexed as you are,” he said to an incredulous Sen. Johnson.

Notwithstanding his surprise over the amount cited by the commissioner, Johnson admitted that “it's hard on these vendors... We can't continue to have these folks out there providing services and not being compensated.”

The inability to make timely payments to vendors, residents, and workers has long been [a thorny issue](#) for the Government of the Virgin Islands.