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Bryan Nominates BIR Director Joel Lee to Lead Casino Control Commission

Governor Bryan has nominated BIR Director Joel Lee to become chairman and chief executive officer of the Casino Control Commission, replacing retiring chairman Marvin Pickering as the administration prepares for another leadership shift.

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BIR Director Joel Lee. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has nominated Internal Revenue Bureau Director Joel Lee to serve as chairman and chief executive officer of the V.I. Casino Control Commission, tapping one of his administration's top financial officials to replace outgoing chairman Marvin Pickering.

Bryan made the announcement Monday during Government House's weekly press briefing, saying Pickering had decided to retire after serving out a six-year term that he said ends on April 15.

"So today, I would like to announce Joel Lee as a nominee to the Legislature for the Casino Control Commission," Bryan said.

Bryan noted the move carries a certain continuity, as Pickering also came from the Internal Revenue Bureau before taking over the commission. He described Lee as a certified public accountant and financial manager who has played a central role in the administration's tax and financial operations.

The governor said Lee has helped oversee tax administration during a period in which the government has paid out more than half a billion dollars in taxes, and he hinted that another check distribution announcement could be coming soon, telling residents to "expect to get a next check" before Carnival.

Bryan also said Lee has represented the administration on financial matters before the Legislature and has proven himself as a trusted member of the government's financial team. Though he acknowledged the administration will feel the loss of Lee at the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bryan said he believes Lee is well suited to continue the work Pickering has done at the Casino Control Commission.

"So as much as we are kind of grieving the loss of losing him at IRB, we know that he's going to do an incredible job at the casino commission," Bryan said.

Lee, speaking briefly after the announcement, thanked Bryan for what he described as a vote of confidence in his abilities and said he was honored to continue serving the Virgin Islands in a new role if confirmed.

"I wish to also bring my skill set and help continue the good work that Mr. Pickering has started," Lee said.

Bryan praised Pickering's tenure and wished him a peaceful and rewarding retirement, saying he had done "an awesome job" at the commission. He added that Lee will remain at BIR for the foreseeable future until the Legislature acts on the nomination. Only after confirmation, Bryan said, will the administration make decisions about who should succeed him at BIR.

The announcement positions Lee for a transition from tax administration to gaming regulation at a time when the Casino Control Commission remains a key institution in overseeing one of the territory's most closely watched economic sectors. For now, however, the move remains subject to legislative confirmation.