

The Virgin Islands Consortium

De Jongh Rebukes Senate For Cutting His 2015 Budget While Increasing Their Own

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On Wednesday night, Governor John P. de Jongh, Jr. took action on the final pieces of legislation that comprise the Fiscal Year 2015 budget for the Virgin Islands government. In approving Bill 30-0463, the largest of the budget bills for the operations of the central government, which also contained the controversial streetlight amendment the Governor [vetoed this week](#), de Jongh said it was a "selfish posture" by the Senate to increase its budget, while slashing the operating budget of the Office of the Governor from \$9 to \$2 million for Fiscal Year 2015.

In a letter to Senate President Shawn Michael Malone on Wednesday night, Governor de Jongh wrote, "Why this budget reduction was limited solely to the Office of the Governor

is puzzling since this body undergoes a similar transition on a more frequent basis. Furthermore, the disparity in treatment in this manner as compared to the selfish posture of the Legislature by increasing its own budget is antithetical to the proper and respectful functioning of co-equal branches of government."

The Governor continued, "The failure to act on many of my Administration's proposals submitted with the Fiscal Year 2015 Executive Budget to bridge the revenue gap, and passing decreased appropriations for the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Bureau of Corrections and the Virgin Islands Police Department, lacks a fundamental understanding of how we are expected to work collaboratively to further revenue generation as well as compliance in key areas concerning public safety."

In September, the 30th Legislature [increased its budget](#) for 2015 by \$3 million.