

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sen. Diane Capehart Loses Seat

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Senator Diane Capehart will serve her final months in office and then make room for the newly-elected leaders and some of her old colleagues come Jan. 2014, as she failed to garner enough support on Nov. 4 to secure her seat in the upcoming 31st Legislature.

Capehart was holding on when the numbers began trickling in late Tuesday night, but as time passed, it became clear that the Senator--who many believe lost because of her infamous "yes" vote on a "Streetlights Bill" that sought to give the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) the power to charge customers for the usage of streetlights--would not collect enough votes to hold on to her seat.

Senator Capehart finished 11th with 1,942 votes.

Speaking to *VI Consortium* one day before the election, Capehart said she would be "at peace with it," if she lost; adding that the people elected her to work and that's exactly what she has been doing. Capehart did, however, acknowledge that the "Streetlights" measure hurt her, and said if she had the opportunity to repeal the measure, she would.

The controversial bill became a problem for Capehart after [senators had voted to pass onto customers the cost of keeping the Virgin Islands' roads lit](#), as WAPA Executive Director, Hugo Hodge, had been asking the 30th Legislature for the \$11 million the government owed the Authority.

After voting in favor of the measure, the freshman senator moved to control the fallout by issuing a press release explaining her stance; however, the backlash intensified when she said that passing streetlight costs onto residents of the territory was the "least painful solution."

"In this economy, no one wants to pay additional fees or surcharges of any kind," she said. "I understand that. But when the status quo leaves us with poorly lit areas in our towns and dark roadways, coupled with a \$2 million budget deficit and potential layoffs as a cure, we have to find the least painful solution."

VI Consortium has reached out to the senator for further comment and will update this story once a response is received.