

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senate President Malone Says HOVENSA Deal Should Be Left To Incoming Governor, Public Hearings Should Be Held

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Ernice Gilbert **November 10, 2014**



Shawn-Michael Malone, Senate President of the 30th Legislature, Monday revealed his position on the sale of HOVENSA, stating that any deal of this nature should be left to the incoming Administration and members of the 31st Legislature.

Malone, who made an unsuccessful run for the Delegate to Congress seat against Stacy Plaskett in the Democratic Primaries in August, expressed concern that the current Senate would be forced to ratify a wide-ranging deal in less than a month, when Government negotiations for the sale of HOVENSA had been on-going for over a year.

"I think it is wrong and unfair that discussions and negotiations have been taking place for more than a year and the Senate is, once again, being given very short notice to consider this research and fully review this agreement with the potential of lasting up to 40 years," Malone said. "I believe there should be hearings to allow the public to voice their opinions on this proposal, before the agreement is ratified."

Malone added that incoming members of the 31st Legislature should be given the opportunity to confer with industry experts before making a final decision on the Operating Agreement signed between the Virgin Islands Government and ABR VI that is currently before the Legislature for ratification.

"The next senate would be wise to obtain oil industry experts as consultants to lead them through the process prior to making any decisions," he said.

Malone continued: "The Legislature will convene November 19th to conclude action on pending measures, consider overrides and any pending nominations before it adjourns. I will discuss with my colleagues their thoughts on this matter and issue a statement on the body's intentions."

The 30th Legislature will host a Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, Nov. 10 at 4 p.m. at the Fritz Lawaetz Conference Room on St. Croix to receive testimony on the proposed agreement between the VI Government and ABR VI. Robert Shrader and Darryl Hardy of Monarch Energy Partners will also testify on behalf of their company.