

The Virgin Islands Consortium

De Jongh Vetoes Bill That Sought To Increase Height Of Casino Buildings On St. Croix

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In one of several final actions taken before vacating office today, Gov. John P. de Jongh, Jr. on Sunday vetoed Bill 30-0561, which sought to increase the height of casinos in certain zoning districts on St. Croix from six stories to eight stories.

In a transmittal letter to Senate President Shawn Michael-Malone, de Jongh expressed his "support for the casino and gaming industry as well as development projects which facilitate revenue growth, particularly on the island of St. Croix," but explained his reasons for rejecting the measure.

"Increasing the maximum height of casinos within the R-3 and R-5 zoning districts from six (6) stories to eight (8) stories may not appear on its face to be a dramatic change, however, even this modification to the law should be guided by the established protocols and processes to ensure that the necessary public hearings are conducted and public comments are solicited," de Jongh wrote.

The governor went on to say that even supporters of the bill "agree that adherence to a process is critical." He further implored supporters to "proceed in a manner where the total impact of such a far reaching change to the Territory's zoning involves input from all parties" in order to weigh "the impact to adjacent land and homeowners, and to determine community readiness."

The bill was authored by Senate Vice President Samuel Sanes and was presented to Gov. de Jongh on Jan. 2.