

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens To De Jongh: Pay The Full Sum Plus 9.5 Interest

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ST. THOMAS – A local Senator said he thanks former Gov. John de Jongh for making the “first installment payment” on the \$490,000 he borrowed from the government to make security upgrades to his private residence in Charlotte Amalie, but that he still owes more money.

Sen. Kenneth Gittens said he had written to U.S. Attorney Ronald Sharpe and U.S. Department of the Interior’s Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall when the news broke this weekend that de Jongh had made a payment to the government of \$202, 831.60 for the work done.

"I would like to thank the governor for making the effort to repay the people of the Virgin Islands the funds used improperly and illegally to make improvements at his personal residence," Gittens said. "Whereas some media sources say that he 'settled up' or 'made good on his promise to pay,' I call it the first installment payment."

Gittens said de Jongh is still responsible for paying the balance of \$287,168.40 plus 9.5 percent interest on the \$490,000 he originally borrowed, adding that he co-sponsored a resolution in the previous 30th Legislature calling on the former governor to make the payment by Jan. 5, 2015 – which has since passed.

"We, as a territory, have to decide if we are serious about stamping out public corruption," Gittens said. "We've seen where our elected officials on the mainland were indicted and/or jailed for simpler infractions. But all in all, I look forward to the full payment of funds used in addition to the 9.5 percent interest as the resolution calls for, or that a full-scale criminal investigation be brought in order to recoup the remainder of the people's money."