

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Forde: Time To Scrub The Pigeon Problem In Charlotte Amalie

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ST. THOMAS – Parts of downtown Charlotte Amalie are going to the birds – pigeons that is. And St. Thomas Sen. Jean Forde has a better idea of what to do about it.

[During the confirmation hearing](#) for Planning and Natural Resources Commissioner designee Dawn Henry last week, Forde asked Henry if her department had heard complaints about the pigeon problem.

Forde told the *Virgin Islands Consortium* Monday that the largest concentrations of feral pigeons are in the Market Square and Fort Christian parking lot areas of Charlotte Amalie.

“The pigeon population is growing tremendously,” Forde said, adding that the feces of the birds in areas such as Market Square where people walk and eat presents a significant health risk that few are aware of.

And its not just the nuisance of cleaning up a car windshield after the pigeons have “bombed” your automobile or the foul odor their acidic feces presents, Forde cited a [New York Times report](#) that feral pigeons are responsible for \$1.1 billion worth of damage annually on the U.S. mainland.

“It can really pose a problem,” Forde said. “Some states have even implemented birth control and trapping measures to help control the pigeon population.”

Forde said when he mentioned the feral pigeon problem to Henry to gauge her level of awareness on the issue. “I wanted to see if the department (DPNR) was getting any complaints and see what can be done about the problem before it gets out of control,” he said, adding that the pigeon feces damage historic buildings like Fort Christian as well.

The St. Thomas senator said he was not convinced Henry has the level of awareness about the issue that is needed so he wrote a letter asking her to specifically look into the feral pigeon problem in the Market Square and Fort Christian parking lot areas of Charlotte Amalie.

“This is something for us to look out for,” Forde said. “Certainly it is becoming a big problem for vehicle owners who park in those areas.”

According to Wikipedia, the domestic pigeon was originally bred from the wild rock dove, which naturally inhabits sea cliffs. Feral pigeons will interbreed with doves and find the ledges of buildings to be a substitute for sea cliffs.