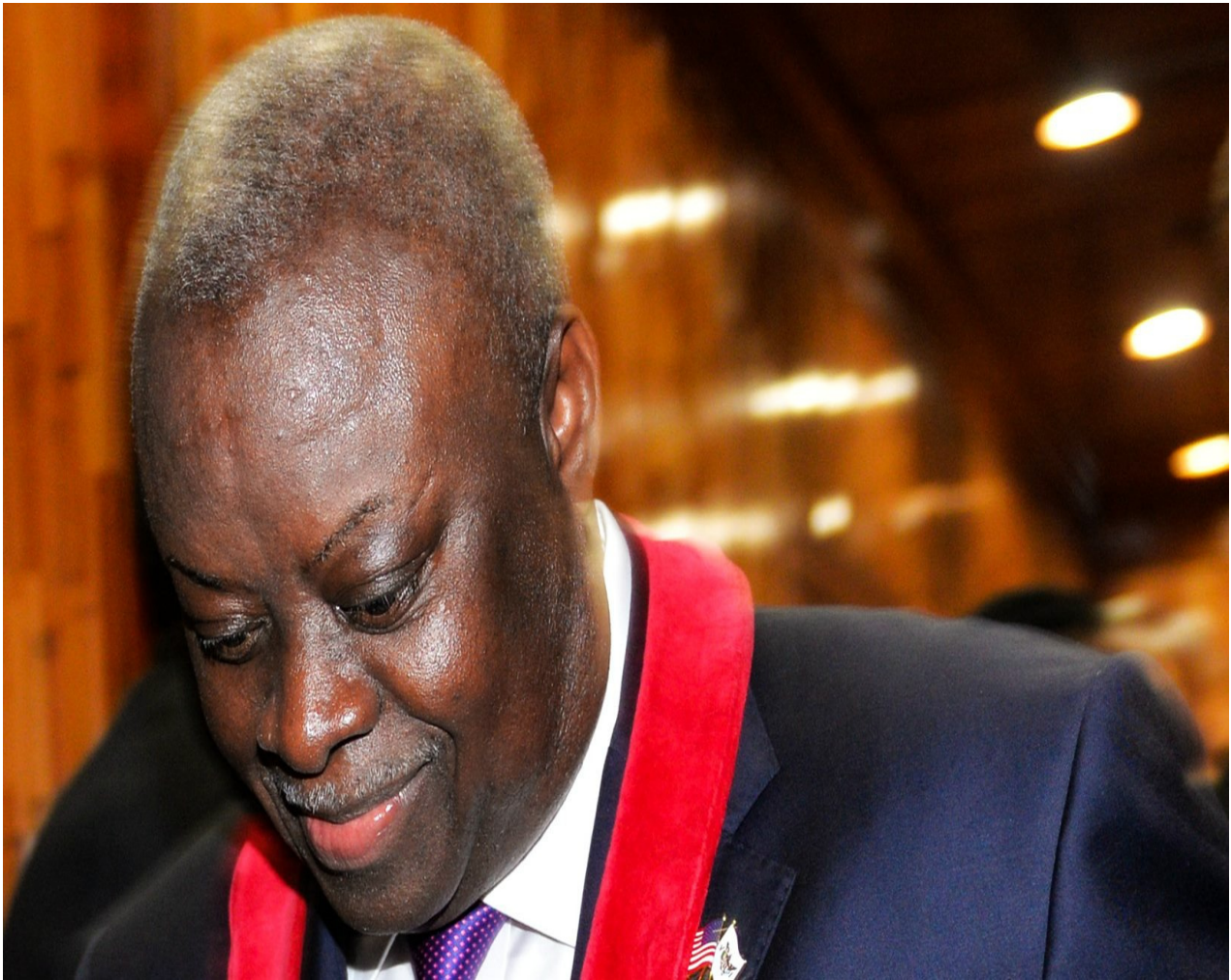


The Virgin Islands Consortium

\$350K For Executive Branch Limousines Not Possible At This Time, Senate President Says

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ST. THOMAS -- President of the 31st Legislature Neville James, [in a letter](#) addressed to Governor Kenneth Mapp, asked that the territory's leader remove from a bill intended to purchase a new fleet of first responder vehicles the request of \$350,000 to acquire new limousines for the executive branch, "until the Legislature can responsibly appropriate the funds to support this measure."

The Consortium first brought the ceremonial/limousines funding request [to the fore](#), finding the application odd as the governor, during his office's Senate FY 2016 budget hearing, made known through Nellie C. Varlack, director of business and administration, that \$120,000 in funding was already allocated in his budget for three limousines. It also

remains unclear as to why the request went up from \$120,000 to \$350,000.

James was responding to the governor on recent action the chief executive took on bills forwarded to his desk.

"I deeply appreciate that you have addressed the critical shortages of vehicles for the essential emergency sectors of our government. It is crucial that we provide the management and staff of these agencies all the support they need so they can do their jobs to the best of their ability and keep the community safe. However, in regards to the \$350,000 which would be appropriated for the purchase of ceremonial/official vehicles, I would kindly ask that you consider removing this particular request until the Legislature can responsibly appropriate the funds to support this measure," the Senate president said.

He added: "Based on testimony given to the Committee on Finance on July 8, 2015 during the Office of the Governor Budget Hearing, Nellie C. Varlack, Director of Business and Administration stated on record, that your office has allocated S 120,000 for the purchase for limousines/ceremonial vehicles for each district under the Capital Outlay section of the budget report. This allocation, if the budget is approved, should prove sufficient until the Legislature can identify monies to properly finance the request in question, unless there has been an event or occurrence between July 8, 2015 and August 14, 2015."

Even so, James thanked the governor for the swift action taken various measures -- even bills that were sent back to the Senate to be corrected, stating, "In the instances where the errors were those of a technical nature, I appreciate you recognizing in your capacity as Governor, the right to exercise "form" changes necessary pursuant to Title I section 202 of Virgin Islands Code. The legislature will address all of your concerns as it relates to the corrections and your vetoes in the near future."

"It has not been made clear by the administration, as to why the original allocation request in the Fiscal Year 2016 budget is not sufficient at this time to require funding for Government House limousines/ceremonial vehicles to increase by nearly three-fold," James went on.

The Senate president concluded his letter by encouraging the Governor to continue his efforts of providing much-needed resources for the territory's public safety and emergency personnel, in addition to upgrading its parks.

"I look forward to working with you on many more measures, such as these, that further this shared mission," stated James.