

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Janette Millin Young Says ArcLight Deal Is Not Beneficial Enough To Territory

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ST. THOMAS -- Calling the ArcLight/GVI agreement too big of a deal to risk the hope of future amendments, Senate Vice President Janette Millin Young pleaded with her colleagues to take more time to carefully scrutinize the agreement, a press release Mrs. Millin Young's office issued late Tuesday says.

"Why risk St. Croix's biggest asset by not taking the time to make sure this deal is the right deal for Crucians and the Virgin Islands as a whole?" Mrs. Millin Young asked before casting her no vote on the ArcLight agreement.

The St. Thomas Democrat made a motion to send the measure back to committee, stating, but that attempt failed.

"A promise to amend the agreement after the vote is not binding on any of the parties. In fact, we are here today, because previous agreements were breached and we were on the brink of going to court to enforce them," she said.

Earlier this month, Mrs. Millin Young [called on her colleagues to acquire an independent analysis](#) of the agreement so that senators could make a concise decision that would be more beneficial to the entire community, according to the release. Standing strong in her conviction, the senator said she was pleased that the information contained in the legal analysis by outside counsel confirmed many of the questions that she had raised.

"Today, I do not vote as the chair of economic development. This measure was never before my committee. In fact, I was never a party to several other off the record meetings as some of my colleagues were. Too many loose ends and weak assurances are in this agreement. And, the analyses we paid for, I'm very pleased with because many of the misgivings I had are presented by these firms in black and white," she said at the Tuesday session.

"The testifiers before us today said they would tighten the language in the agreement for better protections for the territory. It is irresponsible to move forward on a vote today based on these damning analyses. And by the way, where is our own Legal Counsel's opinion? Colleagues, this agreement is for a possible 40 years -- more than a generation. Demands for additional revenues will increase 10 times or more by then. ArcLight will get these tax benefits for four decades," the legislator added.

Mrs. Millin Young said that at in times past, HESS hired more than 2,000 workers. The new agreement with ArcLight is to hire a minimum of 80, who she says will require less skills and therefore earn less. However, ArcLight officials estimated salaries to be well above \$50,000, with company official Jake Erhard telling Senate President Neville James that that number, which was estimated by Mr. James, would be before benefits, prompting the senator to place the amount at \$75,00 annually instead.

"The Mapp Administration says the agreement is worth \$800M. This sum includes \$368 million for which HOVENSA was suing the government. It is not cash in the treasury. This deal does not help our government meet serious and persistent cash flow issues. It is not enough," Mrs. Millin Young contended.

Millin Young concluded by admonishing leaders to remain vigilant to ensure the promises made by ArcLight and the Mapp administration are fulfilled, now that the agreement has been approved.