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Government and Waste Haulers Reach Temporary Agreement for Garbage Pickup Continuation

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Bates Trucking By. ERNICE GILBER FOR VI CONSORTIUM

The Bryan administration and the territory's waste haulers and landfill operators have agreed on a temporary arrangement for waste collection to continue, according to James Bates, owner of Bates Trucking and one of the more active voices in the push to see the government make good on its \$26 million debt to haulers and landfill operators.

But Mr. Bates, speaking to the Consortium Friday, said only \$2 million was provided to Waste Management by the administration to be divided among the companies. However, he said Governor Albert Bryan vowed during a conference call on Tuesday to pay the entire debt — which started accumulating in 2017.

The agreement means waste collection will continue uninterrupted territory-wide. [Last week](#), the companies banded together and announced waste collection would be halted beginning June 8 if the government failed to make a substantial payment. Today, Mr. Bates said though the \$2 million was not sufficient, the waste haulers and landfill operators decided to continue their work because the government said it would work on paying down the debt without the long stretches of no payments.

"You have to give the government a chance to" fulfill its obligation, Mr. Bates said. Bates Trucking collects waste at 95 percent of St. Croix's housing communities, and 3,500 homes.

Last week, while protesting the government's years-long debt, Mr. Bates said he was grateful for private contracts that have enabled him to keep his workforce employed during the Covid-19 pandemic, but said that with the mounting government debt, his business was at risk and he could not afford to continue providing daily service without receiving payment.

"The Peter's Rest Bates site we're going to have to close it because we owe a lot of vendors and we can't continue to operate like that," Mr. Bates said at the time.