

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Quick Note: Senator Urging Residents To Stay Vigilant As Zika Spreads Through Caribbean

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ST. THOMAS -- Senator Janette Millin Young on Wednesday commended the Department of Tourism for its response to the Zika virus, and encouraged residents to remain vigilant as the virus -- a disease possibly linked to microcephaly, which causes babies to be born with brain damage and unusually small heads -- spreads through Central America and the Caribbean.

"I commend the departments of Tourism and Health for their swift response to my letter last week requesting that they put a plan of action in place to allay any fears and concerns that may be present in the minds of our community, as well as travelers to the territory, and to protect our tourism product," Mrs. Millin Young said.

"Taking into consideration that several airlines and cruise companies are offering refunds and travel credits to pregnant women traveling to countries that have been placed on the Zika watch list, we must take every precautionary measure to ensure that our valuable resources, expecting and future mothers and our economy, are not negatively impacted in the aftermath of this fast-moving virus," she added.

The three-term Democrat also encouraged a public health initiative to encourage residents in light of confirmation that the virus can also be transmitted through sexual intercourse.

"Warning people to not get pregnant is not the only viable solution to this complex and evolving virus. We must provide resources as well as guidance and constant updates so that our community is aware and can respond proactively to any situation," Mrs. Millin Young concluded.

Feature Image: Gleyse Kelly da Silva from Brazil holds her daughter, Maria Giovanna, who was born with microcephaly.