

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Rules Committee To Hold Hearings On 'Virgin Islands Sin Tax' Bill, More Mapp Nominees This Week

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Kenneth Gittens, chairman of the Legislature's Committee on Rules and Judiciary has announced two upcoming hearings scheduled for this week where senators will vet various bills and consider Governor Kenneth Mapp's nominations to fill vacant positions on various boards and commissions, a press release Mr. Gittens' office issued on Monday has revealed.

"We have another wave of nominees coming before the committee over the next few days where we will hear from those tapped to hold positions, relative to the respective boards or commissions. So far our committee has seen a number of nominees and our work continues to ensure that those forwarded are suitable for their respective positions,"

Mr. Gittens said.

He said at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, the committee will meet in the Frits Lawaetz Conference Room here to determine the nominations of Raymond Williams and David Hughes, both as members of the Public Service Commission. The committee will later consider bill no. 31-0023 -- "an Act amending Title 33 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3 relative to excise taxes on cigarettes and Chapter 111 establishing The Virgin Islands Sin Tax Fund."

The committee will also consider bill no. 31-0115 relating to exemptions from the smoking ban and amending sections of the law, repealing the exemption of cigars from excise taxes and Bill No. 31-0179 - relating to the time for filing appeals to the Public Employees Relations Board for discrimination.

The second hearing this week will be held 9:30 a.m. Thursday in the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Chambers on St. Thomas where senators will consider more nominees and bills as Stacy A. Bourne has been nominated to serve as a member of the Board of Architects, Engineers & Land Surveyors and Vince Danet has been tapped to serve as a member of the Public Services Commission.

The committee will consider bill no. 31-0071 - "an Act amending local law relating to penalties for improperly conducting tax and public sewer system user fee auctions," and bill no. 31-0159 - relating to persons committing criminal acts while wearing body armor.

"As the committee members and other senators vet these nominees and bills and make decisions in the best interest of the residents of our territory, I urge residents to pay attention and follow the hearings in person or by various media. Everything we do impacts our residents in one way or another and I charge them to stay via the various media as we work to improve the quality of life here," Mr. Gittens concluded.