

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Lawmakers Schedule Town Hall Meeting For Status Update On Rundown La Reine Fish Market

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Ernice Gilbert **February 21, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- Senator Kenneth Gittens is spearheading efforts of his Crucian colleagues in organizing a town hall meeting that will focus on getting updates from government officials and having discussions with community stakeholders and the fishing community about the troubled La Reine Fish Market, a press release Mr. Gittens' office issued on Thursday has revealed.

The town hall meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday at 6:00 p.m. at the Central High School Curriculum Center in Kingshill.

“Based on testimony from Public Works Commissioner Gustav James during a recent senate hearing, followed by additional conversation with him, we determined that it would be in the best interest of all involved to have a town hall meeting to discuss the issues. We have invited government officials to discuss the status of the structure and plans for improvements,” Mr. Gittens said.

The second-term Democrat said the Villa La Reine Fish Market was built to create a clean, secure and convenient location for fishermen and customers to connect for the selling and buying of local seafood products. He said not too long after its construction, issues arose and have not yet been resolved, meanwhile the facility has not been in use for years.

Meanwhile, in a recent conversation with Senator Kurt Violet, the lawmaker told The Consortium that hundreds of thousands of dollars had been allocated for repairs of the facility, but movement to get the project started has been slow. Mr. Violet, displeased with the market's condition, mobilized his staff to repaint the vegetable portion of the market, gaining support from firms like Home Depot, whose donation of paint and the tools needed to do the job aided greatly, according to the senator.

“I believe that it is time to determine the existing structural issues with the facility and what it will take for us to bring it back to a condition where it can be used by the fishermen of the district. The legislature has repeatedly appropriated funding to help mitigate this issue and to date we have not come to a fruitful outcome,” Mr. Gittens said.

St. Croix Administrator Stephanie Williams, Public Works Commissioner Gustav James, Planning and Natural Resources Commissioner Dawn Henry, Agriculture Commissioner Carlos Robles and Public Finance Authority Executive Director Valdemier Collens have all been invited to give remarks.

Mr. Gittens encouraged the entire community to attend the meeting. *Feature Image: Recently painted La Reine Fish and Vegetable Market.*

Image Credit: VIC.