The Virgin Islands Consortium

Quick Notes: Mapp Hosts Meeting On St. Croix With Senators And Business Leaders

VIC News / **Published On January 13, 2017 11:06 AM /**

Staff January 13, 2017

ST. CROIX -- Governor Mapp, members of his administration, members of the 32nd Legislature and members of the St. Croix business community met on Thursday to discuss the implications of proposed sin taxes and timeshare taxes on the local St. Croix economy, Government House announced via press release. The meeting was similar to one held [in St. Thomas on Tuesday](#).

According to the release, Mr. Mapp opened by stating that he recognized that the concerns of the St. Croix businesses differ from those of their St. Thomas counterparts, and that for that reason he recognized their perspective would carry a unique value.

Representatives from the business community included the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Association, and private business owners that shared their concerns and ideas. One restaurant owner indicated that unlike St. Thomas, the majority of diners were locals, and would potentially be more sensitive to tax hikes.

Mr. Mapp acknowledged this concern, stating, “This is the purpose of this forum, so that we can evaluate the opportunities and risks that will eventually address the issue. Correcting the deficit without harming our local businesses [or] adding to the cost of everyday necessities.”

Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Nellon Bowry, as he did during the St. Thomas gathering, gave a general financial overview of the financial condition of the Government of the V.I. from 2010 to present. And like he did in Charlotte Amalie, Commissioner of Finance Valdamier Collens presented highlights of Mr. Mapp's five-year economic recovery plan. Marvin Pickering, the Director of the Virgin Islands Bureau of Internal Revenue, presented an analysis of the proposed “sin taxes” to the group, outlining the revenue projections for each of the proposed commodities. Mr. Pickering did the same in St. Thomas.

And Department of Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty, presented on the proposed legislation that would provide for an annual rate of $30 per day for timeshare owners, mirroring her presentation in St. Thomas.

According to Government House, during the discussions, business owners shared their innovative and aggressive methods of cost-cutting measures that they have used to survive the economic downturn that Mr. Mapp's five-year plan seeks to correct. The governor assured participants of Thursday's gathering that the roundtable discussions were a modern approach to opening conversations between the public and private sectors to build a stronger Virgin Islands that would benefit all, according to Government House.