

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dividing Government Land For Sale Is One Of Multiple Bills By Hansen To Avert Debt Crisis

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Alicia Hansen on Wednesday issued a release detailing her bills for offsetting a financial collapse of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Mrs. Hansen is the first lawmaker to come forward with a plan, although Democrats who have spoken with The Consortium said they were allowing the business community to present their ideas before putting any measure forward.

The measures were first introduced during the 30th Legislature, which Mrs. Hansen said were enhanced in hopes that the current body would steer away from the governor's [five-year economic growth "sin" tax measure](#), and toward what Mrs. Hansen described as a "moderate and lucrative plan using new revenue streams."

One of the measures calls for a Property and Procurement mandate to divide for sale government land, which Mrs. Hansen contends stands to generate new property tax revenues. Another proposal would repeal the law that merges businesses with taxes by separating the request for a business license from having to be accompanied by an Internal Revenue clearance letter, according to the release. The release states that currently, the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs requires a clearance letter from IRB in order to acquire a business license, which Mrs. Hansen says stifles many of the potential business owners that would contribute to the revenue stream in the territory.

"Let Licensing and Consumer Affairs deal with licensure, and IRB deal with tax collections," she said.

Other proposals include mandating that all government agencies and departments that receive federal funding used for purchase orders be spent in the Virgin Islands through local vendors; streamlining the Economic Development Commission (EDC) approval process to up to 90 days and automatic renewal after 6 months, excluding holidays; mandate that the Racino pay gross receipt taxes; mandate that casinos pay gross receipt taxes; and a measure to extend the date of the Hotel Development Act and the Recovery Act. The release did not explain the impact of the latter measure.

"These measures will generate millions of dollars in federal funds both personal and in gross receipt taxes in addition to the positive financial domino effect. It is high time that we stabilize our own economy by reinvesting in the hard-working men and women already contributing to this society," Mrs. Hansen concluded.

Feature Image: Senator Alicia Hansen holds a press conference at the Gertrude's Restaurant on St. Croix during the lead up the the November 2016 General Election. (Credit: VIC)