

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Francis, Chair Of Rules Committee, Asks Residents To Submit Comments Ahead Of Thursday's Sin Tax Hearing

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ST. CROIX -- Ahead of Thursday's hearing of the Committee of Rules and Judiciary, Senator Novelle E. Francis, chairman of the committee, is inviting residents to submit their written testimony, expressing their views on the bills to be discussed, a release Mr. Francis's office issued Friday has made known.

The hearing is the first time this committee is meeting in the 32nd Legislature and will take place 9:30 a.m. Thursday in the Frits E. Lawaetz Conference Room on St. Croix. Mr. Francis said he is looking forward to a very productive hearing, vetting bills and

considering nominations of individuals who have been sent down to the Legislature by Governor Kenneth E. Mapp for its advice and consent.

“This is our first meeting for this term and we welcome input from the community as we consider these very important bills. We have been hearing a lot of discussion pertaining to these bills in the community, on radio programs and seeing them on social media. What we want to do is make the views of our residents a part of our official record and use them as tools as we consider these very important bills,” Mr. Francis said.

Among the measures will be Governor Kenneth Mapp's sin tax measure that aims to either introduce or raise taxes on rum, tobacco, sugary drinks and beers, as well as internet purchases and timeshare unit owners. The committee will also vet Bill No. 32-0007- “An Act amending local law relating to the property taxes”. Both measures went through the first stage of the vetting process earlier this week and were [approved by members of the Senate's Committee on Finance](#).

“The bills we will be considering can have lasting effects on our community and its economic viability. We look forward to hearing from members of the governor's financial team and representatives of the business community but also are giving members of the public a chance to submit comments,” Mr. Francis concluded.

Residents interested in making their views part of the record can submit written testimony to Senator Francis's office at The Frits E. Lawaetz Conference Room on St. Croix or email them to senatorfrancis@legvi.org by Tuesday, February.

During Thursday's hearing, the committee will also be considering the nominations of Aida Iris Bermudez as a member of the Juan F. Luis Hospital Board; Hubert Antonio Turnbull as a member of the V.I. Water & Power Authority Board; Felecia Blyden as commissioner of Department of Human Services; and Luis R. Ayala, as a member of the V.I. Waste Management Authority Board.

Thursday's hearing will be aired live on LegitTV Channel 5. It will also be broadcast on radio on 91.9 FM and 102.9 FM and can be viewed via the internet on the Live Stream TV on www.legvi.org.