

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Calls Senate Into Special Session To Consider 7 Proposals, Among Them Funds For JFL Drainage Issues And Paul E. Joseph Stadium Project

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ST. THOMAS -- Citing the necessity for immediate action, Governor Kenneth Mapp has called the 32nd Legislature into a special session for Wednesday to consider seven proposed bills, Government House announced late Thursday.

In his [letter of transmittal to Senate President Myron D. Jackson](#), the governor urges that the Legislature amend the Virgin Islands Horse Racing Industry Assistance Act to include strong anti-doping language, which he submitted previously as part of the Franchise Agreement with VIGL, Inc. Failure to enact anti-doping rules, Mr. Mapp contends, would

kill the deal ratified last year with VIGL. He is also, once again, proposing that the Legislature consolidate the two existing District Commissions to establish a single regulatory authority within the Department Sports, Parks and Recreation.

One of the governor's proposed bills for consideration at the special session would establish a formula for distribution of race track casino revenue. Fifty percent of the fund would go to the general fund; 30% would be evenly divided between the horsemen's associations in both districts; 3% to a newly established Hospitality Fund for tourism industry training; 3% to a newly established Thoroughbred Fund to improve facilities and breeding stock; 5% to the Agriculture Revolving Fund for purchase and cultivation of fresh fruits and vegetables for local consumption; 4% to the Department of Agriculture for care of injured or retired race horses; and 5% to the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation to further develop youth and sports activities.

Other proposed bills would authorize the government to purchase surrounding lands in order to complete the Paul E. Joseph Stadium Project, to reprogram certain balances from completed bond funded projects to repair educational facilities, and to reprogram Community Facilities Trust Fund balances to repair sports facilities.

Mr. Mapp also is requesting that the appropriation to the Department of Human Services be increased by \$10 million to provide the local match for the Medical Assistance Program. Twenty-two thousand Virgin Islanders are served by the program, for which \$5 million was appropriated this fiscal year. The government's obligation, however, is \$13 million.

The territory's leader is also proposing a transfer of \$13 million from the Internal Revenue Matching Fund to the General Fund. This is made possible as the result of the adjustment in the rum cover-over rate from \$10.50 per proof gallon to \$13.25 per proof gallon in fiscal year 2016. Mr. Mapp is requesting that another \$2 million be transferred from the Tourism Advertising Revolving Fund to the General Fund. Both transfers are part of the effort to balance this fiscal year's budget, according to Government House.

To address [emergency sewer repairs](#) and line replacements at the Juan F. Luis Hospital, the governor is requesting an appropriation of \$3 million. It would require reprogramming certain Gross Receipts Tax Bonds and Matching Fund Bonds, along with funds from the Community Facilities Trust Account.

Members of the governor's administration representing various departments and agencies will be on hand to answer senators' questions at the May 10 special session.