

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Mapp Administration Releases \$4 Million In Tax Refunds Thursday

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp on Thursday announced that more than \$4 million in tax refunds were mailed out this morning.

The release of additional refunds comes exactly one month after the governor [announced the issuance of 1,954 refund checks](#) on Thursday, April 25, which was the equivalent of \$5 million. It also comes two weeks following the release of an additional 1,857 refund checks made available on May 11, which equated to \$3.8 million, according to Government House. A release was not issued announcing the May 11 issuance of refund checks.

“We continue to make progress in getting all these refunds out and hope this will brighten a few more faces as we prepare to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice over this holiday weekend,” Mr. Mapp said, referring to the Memorial Day Weekend.

Today's announcement was made amid unflattering press for the Mapp administration. This morning, The Consortium reported that the Bureau of Corrections was terminating employees because of the "continued financial crisis" at the central government, according to a letter B.O.C. wrote to an employee it had terminated. The bureau's director, Rick Mulgrav, told The Consortium late Wednesday that there would most likely be additional terminations following the three employees B.O.C. had made redundant.

The letter stood in stark contrast to Mr. Mapp's portrayal of the government's financial situation. During a recent press conference, Mr. Mapp said tax increases levied through his Revenue Enhancement and Economic Recovery Act of 2017 — which raised taxes on sugary drinks, alcohol and tobacco products, as well as hikes to property and timeshare unit taxes — had improved the government's financial standing, and that there would be no need for furloughs, layoffs, shorter work weeks and shortened school days. He made those claims [while reassuring residents earlier this month that the territory would not fall into darkness](#) because the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority [had reverted back to oil](#).

In praising Senate Democrats [who supported the bill](#), Mr. Mapp said, “Because of their vote, we can solve this problem and assist the Water and Power Authority. Because they voted yes, no government worker is struggling in terms of working 80 hours per pay period. Because they voted yes, no school in this territory is being closed. Because they voted yes, we’re not only able to keep the lights on, keep the payroll intact, but [are now releasing income tax refunds](#).”

The Bureau of Internal Revenue plans to begin disbursing 2016 tax refunds by mid-summer, according to Government House. Mr. Mapp said an announcement will be made as the date approaches when more refunds could be paid.

“We thank the community for their patience as we currently must manage our cash flow on a weekly basis,” said the territory's leader. “And, once again, I thank the employees of B.I.R. and the Department of Finance for their efforts in getting these refunds processed.”

Taxpayers with questions about their tax returns or refunds may contact B.I.R. at (340) 715-1040.