The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp To Submit 2018 Budget At Least One Month After Deadline

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Ernice Gilbert June 06, 2017

ST. THOMAS -- The Mapp administration has failed to meet the deadline to submit the government's annual budget to the Senate, which falls in line with Governor Mapp's own prediction, made during a March 22 press conference, where he told reporters that the May 31 deadline would be missed.

In a release issued Tuesday, Government House said the delay will allow the administration to take further steps in reducing government expenditures, as well as allowing enough time for new revenue-enhancing tax initiatives that were implemented last month, to take effect.

This year marks the first time that the administration did not meet the deadline. However, the late submission is nothing new, with some of the prior governors missing the deadline as well.

“We anticipate having a more complete fiscal profile at the end of June, which marks the end of the third quarter of the fiscal year,” said Nellon Bowry, director of the Office of Management and Budget said. “By then, as the governor previously indicated, the Office of Management and Budget and our financial consultants will have completed an analysis of the impact of new revenue streams and reduced expenditures on the fiscal condition of the government.”

While the analysis is still in process, the results are expected to reveal whether Mr. Mapp's five-year plan has had any positive impact on the government's coffers and therefore managed to mitigate much of the cost-saving action that the governor forewarned would have taken place were it not for the passage and subsequent implementation of the his five-year economic plan, which included increase in taxes on rum, sugar drinks, tobacco products and beer -- called the sin taxes -- as well as additional taxes on property and timeshare unit owners.

If the results of the analysis call for additional cuts in government because financial projections failed to meet expectations, Mr. Mapp could face a swift rebuke from Virgin Islanders -- many of whom took to the streets in protest against the tax increases.