

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Millin Young Calls For Special U.S. Team To Help Human Services Expedite DSNAP Release

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Ernice Gilbert **November 02, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- Senator Janette Millin Young said on Wednesday that the Mapp administration should considering flying in a special team from the U.S. mainland to assist the local Dept. of Human Services to expedite "any and all" Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or DSNAP, challenges that the local department faces.

Ms. Millin Young's comments came in a release issued on Wednesday, and they follow Mr. Mapp's own [challenges in clearly explaining](#) why the food stamps -- originally scheduled to be released on Oct. 16 -- was suddenly delayed to November 2. Today is November 2, but during the governor's press briefing held on Monday, the territory's leader told this publication that the DSNAP would be released [between November 12-](#)

17.

At first, the governor said the release of the funds was delayed because residents would buy frozen items and had no place to store them, since most of the USVI remains without electricity. The explanation was taken as an insult by many, because it came off as saying Virgin Islanders weren't wise enough to purchase items not needing refrigeration if they had no means of keeping the frozen items cool. Then, the governor changed his explanation to issues within the Dept. of Human Services.

Ms. Millin Young, recognizing the challenges that many in the territory still face, suggested to the administration that "creative and innovative solutions be immediately considered for the thousands of Virgin Islanders who are still in an emergency mode."

And she said Mr. Mapp and his team should be clear in conveying to Washington that the local government still faces a myriad of immense challenges. "Indeed, I strongly urge the Mapp Administration to improve its narrative on the U. S. Virgin Islands reconstruction period. We must be thankful for our positive strides in returning to normalcy. However, [we] have not fixed many problems that emerged from the two hurricanes, and in some places, were preexisting, but worsened due to the natural disasters. It is my intention to work with the governor, other senators, and all stakeholders to create a more prosperous U.S. Virgin Islands," she said.

With the approval of the \$36.5 billion by Congress and President Donald Trump -- of which the territory has been assured \$500 million in low-interest loans from the \$4.9 billion allocated to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands -- Ms. Millin Young said the time to start thinking about building a robust economy had arrived, and called for the repeal of the [sin tax bill](#).

"I opposed this tax increase in the beginning, and today, I oppose them again for their negative impact on our economy. We will not recover with more taxes on our businesses. Our businesses need tax relief to jumpstart our economy," she said.

Additionally, the senator called for property tax Bill No. 32-0030, which seeks to provide relief to property owners who are assessed exorbitant taxes, to be forwarded to the full Senate.

"This bill will be impactful for the territory's residents, especially St. Johnians who pay the most property taxes and get the least government services," Ms. Millin, who sponsored the legislation, said. "This inequity was shown to us all by the way the central government failed to serve St. Johnians after Hurricane Irma hit."

On the infrastructure side, the senator has reached out to Tesla and its [SolarCity](#) subsidiary to come up with temporary and perhaps long-term solutions to provide energy services to the U.S. Virgin Islands. "As policymakers, we need to identify what is needed to attract such development to our shores," Ms. Millin Young said.