

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Assails Senators As Legislature Fails To Act On Bills, Says 'Inaction And Excuses' Won't Advance Virgin Islanders

Politics / **Published On November 22, 2017 12:03 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **November 22, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp on Tuesday lashed out at members of the 32nd Legislature for failing to approve a number of bills in a special session called by the governor and held on Tuesday.

"I'm hopeful Senators understand that their inaction today does not advance our recovery," Mr. Mapp said in a statement issued to the media late Tuesday. "Given the liquidity and cash shortages of the government during this very challenging period, it is essential that we do our part to access the help we are receiving. We have worked hard

as a community and a government – making tremendous progress under very difficult circumstances. We also require a level of diligence and commitment from our lawmakers.”

“I trust that whenever the members of the Legislature decide to act on these measures, they will act favorably,” the governor added.

The measures, 7 in total, seek to accomplish a myriad of goals, some more critical than others. According to the transmittal letter from Government House to the Legislature, the first measure would authorize the Government of the Virgin Islands (G.V.I.) to enter into an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which would pave the way for the G.V.I. to receive hundreds of millions of dollars in FEMA community disaster loans. Congress recently approved \$500 million in low-interest FEMA community disaster loans for the G.V.I., but because the funds are loans, the local government must agree to pay those funds back and, as in any debt obligation deal, provide collateral -- which in the G.V.I.'s case is usually Gross Receipt Taxes or Matching Fund remittances (rum cover over). In order for the Mapp administration to enter into such an agreement with FEMA, the Senate must approve.

Another measure, dubbed the Virgin Islands Source Separation Act, would require residents to start separating their wastes before they are removed by the Waste Management Authority and its contractors. The belief is that once the separation of waste occurs, off-island companies with an interest in waste would see value in purchasing the territory's refuse, as the waste would have already been separated.

A third bill would authorize and appropriate \$9 million to fund the completion of phase two of the Frederiksted Economic Revitalization Project (Paul E. Joseph Stadium). Mr. Mapp has proposed \$6 million from the proceeds of the Limetree Bay Terminals bitumen project; \$2 million from the Community Facilities Trust Account; and \$1 million from the St. Croix Capital Improvement Fund.

Mr. Mapp also forwarded a bill that would amend the Virgin Islands Horse Racing Industry Assistance Act of 2010 to include anti-doping provisions, a territorial horse racing commission, and to allocate revenues. Two zoning measures -- one to authorize the dredging and maintenance of Krause Lagoon and the Cross Channels on St. Croix to return to operating depth of -36ft, and another to allow the entire marine terminal in Gallows Bay to come into compliance with the Coastal Zone Management Act, and to authorize the demolishing and reconstruction of the 3,010 square-foot arrival building -- were also forwarded to the body, along with another measure called the "Virgin Islands Beverage Container Recycling Act".

As for the Senate's reasoning, in a release issued Tuesday, Senate President Myron Jackson expressed concern "on the exclusion of the legislative branch during this time despite their collaborative efforts in support of the governor's \$7.5 billion request for federal aid." Mr. Jackson said the measures will be taken up at the Senate's Nov. 30 session.

But the governor was not satisfied with the senators' decision and, aside from his statement to the media, suggested on his Facebook page that the lawmakers needed to be more serious about their duties to the people of the territory.



Ken Mapp

Nov 21 at 3:50pm • 🌐

Many of us in the US Virgin Islands are working for the recovery of our territory. Our Legislature needs to get on board. Inaction and excuses advance the recovery of our citizens. September 19th and September 19th, two cat 5 storms struck the Islands. What do Members of the Legislature do their jobs pursuant to the Revised Organic Act of 1954? My Friends at the Capitol Building, let's get on board!

👍❤️😄 101

42 Comments



Ken Mapp is at House of Blues Orlando.

Nov 21 at 9:29pm •

My Legislature chose not to work today. No fun hanging with the original Wailers. What else



23 Comments

"Many of us in the U.S. Virgin Islands are working hard for the recovery of our territory. Our Legislature needs to get on board. Inaction and excuses will not advance the recovery of our citizens. September 5 and September 19, two Cat 5 storms struck our islands. What do members of the Legislature need to do their jobs pursuant to the Revised Organic Act of 1954? My friends at the capitol building, let's get on board," Mr. Mapp wrote.

In another post, he added, "My Legislature chose not to work today. No fret, I'm hanging with the original Wailers. What else can I do?"

The governor is expected back in the territory after Thanksgiving.

© Viconsortium 2026