

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Administration To Release Tax Refunds 'Every Other Week;' Governor Expecting Big, Bold 2018 For Territory

Business / **Published On January 09, 2018 10:25 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **January 09, 2018**



As the April 15 tax filing deadline approaches, the Government of the Virgin Islands has yet to make good on 2016 tax refunds that it owes to people of the territory, even as it continues to owe some residents for years prior. The Mapp administration had made great strides in paying what is due to Virgin Islanders, especially considering the prior administration's freeze on issuing refunds. But the current administration has since lapsed on its once aggressive tax refund-paying strategy, a failing that could be attributed to the territory's multiple financial woes.

Yet, Governor Kenneth Mapp, during an interview with The Consortium at the St. Croix Festival Village about two weeks ago, said after having discussions with Department of Finance Commissioner Valdamier Collens, a decision was made to start issuing tax refunds for 2016 every other week, so that by the time April 2018 comes, the amount the government owes its people will not be as compounded.

"Folks are going to start opening their mailboxes and seeing a little bit of tax refunds come out of them to help them with their recovery issues and the things they have to take care of," the governor [told](#) Sacha Alexander, an educator who hosts cultural and entertainment events for The Consortium. "So I'm looking forward to a big, bold 2018. The Virgin Islands is going to be bigger and better. If we do the things we've been doing and continue to do, we're going to have a lot of success for the people of the territory in helping them rebuild their lives and their businesses and, you know, there's just work all over."

He added, "What we really want to do is release some every other week, that's the plan, and manage the cashflow as we do that. We [did get some financial support](#) from the federal government; we can't use that money for tax refunds, but that money allows us to fill some gaps and so I worked with the commissioner of Finance and we made a decision -- and I'm not going to say the amount -- but every other week, we plan to put some in the mail so we can start knocking them down because, you know, April 15 is around the corner and that would be another set we owe."

The announcement will come as welcome news to residents, many of whom are in need of every dollar they can put their hands on following the two category 5 hurricanes that left multiple parts of the territory in ruins. The Mapp administration estimates that the territory sustained some \$7.5 billion in damage, including the destruction of 10 schools and both hospitals.

Even so, Mr. Mapp is confident that 2018 will be a stellar year for the territory, pointing to the amount of jobs borne out of hurricane recovery, with construction driving much of the economy in the next few years, the governor has said.

And he spoke of the horrendous condition of the roads in the USVI, a problem that existed before Hurricanes Irma and Maria, but was made worse by the storms.

"A lot of things are still being rolled out," the governor said. "There are a lot of programs where people don't have roofs that we're going to be rolling out a program to help folks get a permanent roof back on their home by the building standards. We are really working through the issues with the hospitals; it looks like we're going to end up with some new hospital facilities and we're working through that. We're going to clearly have some new schools, and the biggest issue that I know is on everybody's minds is roads.

"We have problems with asphalt plants. All of the government roads that are not federally designated, FEMA [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] will support fixing them and we're going to do that by the D.O.T. [Department of Transportation] standards. So we're going to be doing that and we're working with the Congress to lift the caps. The roads are really bad, we're really going to have to put some time into it," Mr. Mapp said.

The governor will have to deliver on his promises in 2018, an election year where criticism of his leadership is expected to escalate. Multiple gubernatorial candidates are preparing to ratchet up their attacks on Mr. Mapp, analyzing his governance style for holes, and poring over his record for areas where broadsides could be levied.

Feature Image: Governor Mapp and Vice President Mike Pence get an aerial tour of St. Croix following Hurricanes Irma and Maria. (Credit: Government House)

© Viconsortium 2026