

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Chides 32nd Legislature For Leaving Frederiksted: 'You Are Letting Us Down'

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp took a swipe at members of the 32nd Legislature near the end of his 2018 State of the Territory Address, stating that the lawmakers' decision to leave the building in Frederiksted, seen above, that hosted the Legislature was a bad decision that would negatively impact the revitalization of the town.

"I was saddened to learn that the 32nd Legislature decided to permanently move out of Frederiksted,' Mr. Mapp said. "As the members of this body are aware, the Chief Justice of our Supreme Court expressed his willingness to a joint venture with the Legislature to construct new facilities to house the VI Supreme Court and the St. Croix Legislature offices."

He added: "My friends, don't fret, I'm not getting in your lane. Your decision to permanently leave the town of Frederiksted is absolutely within your discretion. Your rejection of the offers made by me and the Chief Justice to work together on new facilities to remain in Frederiksted is absolutely yours. However, you know that the centerpiece of the economic revitalization of Frederiksted requires some level of government activity to drive private investment in the west-end town, and we were counting on you to do your part. You are letting us down."

With or without the Senate, though, Mr. Mapp said his administration along with the Supreme Court would move forward in building a modern facility, which the governor said would ensure the economic survival of the town. "The people of Frederiksted deserves no less," he said.

The senators [moved to two temporary buildings in Christiansted](#) while a facility in Golden Rock, which the Senate intends to purchase, goes through the procurement process. Senate President Myron Jackson said mold had permeated the Frederiksted building and that the Senate could no longer function there.

Funds for the rental facilities and "hopeful" purchase of the building in Golden Rock, according to Senator Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly, was made possible through a bill senators passed in December that re-appropriated funds that were to be used to repair the Juan F. Luis Hospital's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system, called HVAC, and monies to repair the hospital's sewer issues. In total, \$4 million would be spent on the aforementioned work: \$1 million for the HVAC issues and \$3 million for the sewer problems. The funds were redirected from section 1 of Act No. 7972 and section 2 Act No. 7973.

Following the storms, both of the territory's hospitals were all but shuttered while the government pursues federal dollars to repair or rebuild them.

The building in Golden Rock costs roughly \$975,000, Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly said, for which the Senate has made a downpayment of \$50,000. The facilities in Christiansted are being rented on 6-month contracts, one for \$3,000 monthly and the other for \$11,000 monthly, according to Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly.