

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Port Authority Executive Director David Mapp Subpoenaed To Appear Before Finance Committee

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David Mapp, V.I. Port Authority executive Director

ST. THOMAS -- Port Authority Executive Director David Mapp has been subpoenaed by lawmakers to appear before the Committee on Finance, to face questions relative to the Virgin Islands Port Authority, which has been under immense pressure following the 2017 storms to restore the territory's ports, and has faced a number of internal challenges that have spilled into the public.

But most daunting for V.I.P.A. [is a recent report issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration](#) (F.A.A.), which proposed a \$1,466,775 civil penalty against the port for alleged violations of airport safety regulations at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport in St. Croix and Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas.

Senators had hoped to hear from Mr. Mapp on this and a number of other issues, but he did not show up to the Tuesday budget hearing. The no-show forced senators to vote in and approve a subpoena in an attempt to force an appearance from the outgoing executive director. Damian Cartwright, V.I.P.A.'s assistant executive director, testified in Mr. Mapp's stead on Tuesday.

"It appears like every time we have a hearing, you are the designated person that comes before this committee and provide testimony," Senator Kurt Vialet, chairman of the Committee on Finance, told Mr. Cartwright. "We do believe that when individuals are given a position of management that it is their responsibility to come before the Senate and provide testimony." Mr. Vialet added, "We have in certain departments in this government in which they continue to send those directly below them to represent the interest of the entity that they're managing.

The senator said the committee had attempted to hold the meeting between four to five times because of testifiers' scheduling conflicts. This time, however, "We decided that we were not going to push it back any longer so we decided to have it today. But we do believe that it's the responsibility of all the commissioners, directors, CEOs, etc -- if you're running a department and you're being paid those funds -- you need to come and represent the department."

Senator Dwayne DeGraff chimed in. "We can't keep kicking the ball down the road as we keep saying. We're the first branch of government; we need answers. I think at some point we have to put down our foot and say, 'hey, the buck stops here.'"

The F.A.A. said it inspected both airports in late January and early February 2018 and found numerous violations at both airports. The federal agency alleged that V.I.P.A. did not have qualified personnel to oversee airport operations to conduct required daily inspections, or to conduct airport rescue and firefighting (A.R.F.F.) operations. The agency also alleged that the airports did not maintain and make available to the F.A.A. required records including its airport certification manuals, airport emergency plans, and training records for operations supervisors and A.R.F.F. employees.

Additionally, the F.A.A. alleged that V.I.P.A. did not meet the A.R.F.F. requirements for air carrier flights at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix after an A.R.F.F. unit could not apply a fire-extinguishing agent within the required time and was not capable of performing its required functions.

F.A.A. inspectors also found that V.I.P.A. did not properly grade the safety area for runways at both airports to eliminate hazardous ruts, humps, depressions or other surface variations. The runways and taxiways were not properly lighted, marked, or signed and V.I.P.A. failed to issue notices to airman (NOTAM) informing air carriers of the runway and taxiway issues at the airports, the FAA alleged.

The Port Authority also failed to confirm that each fueling agent at the St. Croix airport had trained fueling personnel, and failed to take immediate action to alleviate wildlife hazards detected at the landfill near the airport, according to the F.A.A.

On improvements at the territory's ports -- both sea and air -- Mr. Cartwright spoke of a number of undertakings, all of which can be read below in the testimony.

[Read the original document](#)

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