

The Virgin Islands Consortium

David Mapp Subpoenaed Again After Failing To Appear Before Senate Committee

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ST. THOMAS -- Port Authority Executive Director David Mapp was subpoenaed by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, chaired by Senator Brian Smith, after failing to appear at a Thursday hearing where he was invited to testify.

Mr. Mapp was scheduled to field lawmakers' questions on [a recent report](#) on V.I.P.A. 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.

It was the second time in a week that Mr. Mapp failed to appear before a Senate committee. (On Tuesday, [he was subpoenaed by the Committee on Finance.](#))

"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 V.I.P.A. Assistant Executive Director Damian Cartwright on Tuesday. "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."

Mr. Smith said his staff delivered the invitation to the Port Authority, where it was signed by a V.I.P.A. staff member. But it appears that Mr. Smith did not followup with the Port Authority in light of Mr. Mapp's no-show on Tuesday. Even so, Mr. Smith -- responding to a question by Senator Novelle Francis -- said no followup was necessary as an official invitation had been sent and received.

Mr. Francis, however, disagreed, and questioned whether the invitation ever arrived at the desk of Mr. Mapp. Mr. Francis's stance was supported by Senator Dwayne DeGraff, but Senators Alicia Hansen and Positive Nelson -- both outgoing lawmakers -- came to Mr. Smith's defense, contending that the Legislature's authority must be respected.

Mrs. Hansen also accused lawmakers of showing favor to the V.I.P.A. executive director because of his relation to Governor Kenneth Mapp. "Why don't you all just say it's the governor's brother and done, and you all don't want to subpoena the governor's brother?" Mrs. Hansen charged.

Voting yes for the subpoena were Senators Nelson, Janelle Sarauw, Hansen, DeGraff, Smith and Jean Forde.

FAA report on V.I.P.A.

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.

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