

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan's First State of the Territory Address Will Most Likely Take Place January 28

VIC News / **Published On December 06, 2018 09:10 AM /**

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Governor-elect Albert Bryan's first State of the Territory Address will most likely take place on January 28, a Monday, some three weeks after taking office on January 7, 2019.

That's according to Mr. Bryan himself, speaking [during a V.I.P.C. interview](#) with The Consortium on Wednesday night.

Mr. Bryan, who intends to take decisive action as it relates to government transparency upon taking office, said because of the runoff election, his team had lost two weeks that would have been used to evaluate the government, hence the reason for the Jan. 28

SoTA. Governor Kenneth Mapp delivered his first SoTA on January 27, 2015. Mr. Mapp had also lost time to evaluate the government in advance of taking office because of a runoff election with former Delegate to Congress Donna Christensen.

While it is too early to get a clear understanding of what the governor-elect will highlight during his first SoTa, he told The Consortium Wednesday night that the government's financial health was bad.

"We're bad," Mr. Bryan said, referring to the government's coffers. "We're solid through December, but come January when all these raises kick in, we're going to have to work hard to make sure that we're balancing the funds."

The governor-elect said the government's precarious financial position was yet another reason for frugality. "That's why [there will be] no wasteful spending," he said. "I'm going to try to be as frugal as possible with the government's money."

Mr. Bryan said while government revenue was up, "it's cash and timing that concerns me. So you're going to get the money, but when?"

During Mr. Mapp's first SoTA, he described a government on the brink of collapse. "Our government is nearing the brink of financial collapse," Mr. Mapp bluntly stated. "Our ability to deliver basic essential services to our communities is diminishing more and more each day."

He added, "My predecessor made a decision to halt employer contributions to the GERS, halt payments of income tax refunds, delay vendor payments as long as possible, and cease payments for workmen's compensation claims for those who have been injured on their jobs.

"All of these factors underscore a worsening fiscal condition. Clearly, even meeting the government's payroll will continue to be a challenge. So, my friends, the state of the territory is critical, and its financial condition is worsening."

While Mr. Bryan is taking over a government whose financial health still needs improvement, it is in a better place than when Mr. Mapp took office. This outlook may well strengthen Mr. Bryan's standing; the governor-elect has said he will not halt projects that started under prior administrations, save for the detection of corruption.

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