The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan's Financial Team Can't Say When Tax Refunds Will Be Issued

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Kirk Callwood has been nominated by Governor Albert Bryan to head the Department of Finance (Image courtesy VI Legislature)

Governor Albert Bryan's financial team on Tuesday told members of the Senate Committee on Finance that it could not say when the issuance of tax refunds would begin.

During questioning, Senator Allison DeGazon asked Commissioner-nominee Kirk Callwood when should residents expect their refunds. Mr. Callwood paused, then deferred to Mr. Bryan's pick for Bureau of Internal Revenue director, Joel Lee. Mr. Lee, however, said while B.I.R. processes the refunds, it is the Department of Finance that determines when the refunds should be issued.

With the onus back on Mr. Callwood, he said, "We have to look at the cashflow. There are some effects from the excise tax ruling." Pressed by Ms. DeGazon, Mr. Callwood admitted that there was no specific date as to when Virgin Islanders would start seeing tax refunds.

Because of a District Court order in November that halted the collection of excise taxes, the Government of the Virgin Islands is projected to lose $40 million in annual revenue, putting a dent in a government whose finances are already severely lacking.

During the 2018 campaign season, Mr. Bryan spoke of paying tax refunds on time, and indicated that it would be one of the priorities of his administration -- even in light of the court's ruling. But with Mr. Callwood's lack of a timeline as to when refunds would be issued, it appears that the administration may have difficulty in fulfilling that promise.

Image Credit: VI Legislature