

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Working With D.P.N.R. To Prioritize La Reine Fish Market Repairs

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ST. CROIX -- Creating a safe and sanitary place for fishermen to clean and sell their catch is crucial to sustaining the local fishing industry and preserving long standing cultural traditions, Senate President Kenneth Gittens said following a recent tour of St. Croix's dilapidated La Reine Fish Market, according to a release from Mr. Gittens office.

Mr. Gittens is working to prioritize repairs to the abandoned fish market, which has not been in active use in more than five years. One of the Senate president's first official acts this term was to call upon the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), which manages the fish market property, to determine what resources were required to reopen this once vibrant facility, the release said.

The senator said little has been done to prevent the deterioration of the fish market, which sustained further damage in Hurricanes Irma and Maria and has become littered with trash and graffiti.

“The La Reine Fish Market is sitting in such a busy area of our community and is a real eyesore that must be addressed,” he said. “After meeting with the new DPNR Commissioner Nominee, I am confident this project will be prioritized.”

During a walk-through of the facility last week, Mr. Gittens said it is long past time to address plumbing and structural issues so that the La Reine Fish Market can be utilized for the purpose for which it was built.

“The Legislature has repeatedly appropriated funding to help make repairs and to date, we have not seen improvements,” he said. “I recently did a walk through at the Fish Market with Commissioner Nominee for the Planning and Natural Resources Department, Jean-Pierre Oriol, and as a result of my inquiries the commissioner was able to determine that significant funds for repairs remain unexpended.”

Mr. Gittens said he will review plans for improvements to ensure that no additional resources are required, but that he would like to see the fish market back in operation as soon as is possible.

“I am going to continue to work closely with Commissioner Oriol and his team to ensure the fish market rehabilitation remains a priority,” he said.