

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Holds Apparent 'Closed Door' Meeting With Senators, Gittens Says

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In a statement issued late Wednesday, Senator Kenneth Gittens -- who brought to light [the \\$2.3 million that was sent to an offshore account from WAPA](#), which the authority maintains was a phishing scam -- said WAPA held an apparent closed-door meeting with lawmakers on Wednesday.

"Late Wednesday morning I received an invitation to participate in a meeting with WAPA officials that same evening," Mr. Gittens said. "I became concerned about the circumstances surrounding the meeting given all that we know that has transpired at WAPA in recent months and my call just last week for investigative hearings."

The senator said he attempted to participate in the meeting via conference call, but before the discussion commenced, he asked WAPA's communications director, Jean Greaux, if the public had been informed about the last-minute meeting with senators. "I was told he was not certain if the public was aware so at that point I declined to participate," Mr. Gittens said. "Again, given the circumstances I think it's irresponsible for legislators to meet with WAPA officials without the public having notice and full access to the discussions."

A senator who spoke on the condition of anonymity told The Consortium that the meeting was held to discuss options to control utility rates. "We are not in support of those exorbitant increases," this senator said, adding that lawmakers were working to come up with a fix, though details of said plan were not divulged.

WAPA has been under immense pressure in recent months. The utility, which says it needs the PSC to raise utility rates so it could continue to operate, was denied the increase at a June 12 PSC meeting.