

The Virgin Islands Consortium

10 Senators Out Of Territory For NCSL Conference In Nashville; DeGazon In Trinidad For West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference

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Senate President Novelle F. Francis and 9 other lawmakers left the territory Sunday to attend the 2019 National Conference of State Legislatures in Nashville Tennessee, according to a release from Mr. Francis's office issued Friday. The senators will return on August 9.

N.C.S.L. is a bi-partisan organization established in 1975 that serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories. The organization monitors, tracks and researches state and state-federal legislation that impacts state and

territorial politics.

Senators traveling to the conference along with Mr. Francis are Marvin Blyden, Donna Frett-Gregory, Kurt Violet, Janelle Sarauw, Javan James, Steven Payne, Stedman Hodge, Dwayne Degraff and Athniel Thomas, Mr. Francis told The Consortium in a separate message.



The legislative delegation will be attending a myriad of conference sessions on topics to include, "Disaster Mitigation and Recovery Partnership", "Navigating Criminal Justice Reform", "Innovations in State Health Systems", "Paying The Price-Strategies To Control Health Care Costs", "No Time To Lose-States Transforming Education Systems", "The U.S. Economic Outlook" and a "Task Force on Agriculture", the release said.

"The National Conference of State Legislatures is committed to the important work of strengthening state and territorial legislatures and will go a long way in assisting us, as lawmakers, to confront and solve the critical issues of our time through a public-private dialogue," said Mr. Francis.

While the 10 lawmakers will be attending the event in Nashville, Senator Allison DeGazon, who left the territory on Sunday for Trinidad, will be present at the West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference, which begins today.



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Drivers for Agriculture

Ms. DeGazon, who heads the Committee on Economic Development, Regulations and Agriculture, will participate in working sessions on school nutrition program using local agriculture, building the economy through the Dept. of Agriculture and learning what other islands are doing to support farmers and local agriculture, said a release the senator's office issued Saturday.

"As stated during my campaign, I will focus on connecting our Caribbean islands to form partnerships and exchange information as we have a similar landscape and are trying to manage out small island economy issues," Ms. DeGazon said.

Other topics from the conference include wealth funds and potential role to be played in Caribbean economic development, forestry and sustainable economic development, and potential of solar energy in agricultural development of Caribbean countries, the release said.

Ms. DeGazon said that there is a lot to learn through traveling to other islands in the region. "Caribbean working sessions have always been productive and fruitful and has helped me propose legislations that generate revenue and streamlines our government."