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Carrion Presses Public Works to Make Good on Payments Owed to Vendors

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Senator Samuel Carrion pressed the Dept. of Public Works during a Tuesday Finance hearing to make good on its \$1.6 million debt owed to vendors.

The senator honed in on the issue when he asked DPW Commissioner Derek Gabriel about the status of vendor payments. The commissioner responded, "I think we can do better. I consistently talk to our team about it because I believe in 'money in is money out' especially with what we are seeing as we have a variety of projects rolling out. We need to make sure our contractors are being paid so they can continue to bid on projects so we can continue to get them moving."

Asked about DPW's turnaround time upon receipt of an invoice, Mr. Gabriel stated, "I would say anywhere from 30-60 days. We do have vendors that go way beyond that and those come from

whether funding issues or sometimes the vendors have inadequate invoices... and in some cases they don't submit invoices for months at a time."

Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, Rueben Jennings, revealed that the balance owed to vendors was \$1,647,565.58 as of Tuesday. "Of those we have approximately \$120,000 that's pre-2021," said Mr. Jennings.

Mr. Carrion then expressed concern on the effects such delays in payments could have on local, small contractors. "I am also concerned about contractors, many of them small companies that depend on this money to continue moving forward," he said.

The commissioner detailed some of the issues he has seen relative to small contractors getting paid, and said the department was "working through to try and drawdown on the federal funds to make those payments."

"Please work on that," Mr. Carrion responded, adding, "any amount is a lot but \$1 million is definitely a lot to have in outstanding payments, so please clear that up."