

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Informing Public When Governor Bryan is Off Island Not a Focus of Administration, Communications Director Indicates

Government / **Published On August 25, 2021 04:57 AM /**

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Governor Albert Bryan. By. VI CONSORTIUM

Issuing a notice to inform Virgin Islanders when Governor Albert Bryan is off island is not a focus of the Bryan administration, the administration's communications director, Richard Motta indicated Tuesday. Government House has been sporadic in notifying the public when the governor leaves the territory.

Mr. Bryan left the USVI Aug. 16, but it wasn't until Aug. 24 when Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach said he was hosting the Covid press briefing because Mr. Bryan was

out of the territory that the public became aware.

Pressed on the matter Tuesday, Mr. Roach said, "It is my practice whenever I leave the territory to put out a press statement regarding that departure." Mr. Roach further stated that what is required of the governor when he departs is that "he notifies me, and I in turn notify the president of the Legislature because I will serve in the acting capacity and the president of the Legislature will serve as acting lieutenant governor in those instances."

Mr. Motta stressed that the administration's focus is on meeting the requirement as obligated by law. "There's no requirement [to inform the public]. What the law prescribes for is that there is an order of succession and we always meet that requirement. We notify the public when we can, to be quite frank," Mr. Motta said. "A lot of times when the governor leaves the territory on personal matters we usually opt out of notifying the public, especially if it's for a relatively short period of time."

The governor's August 16 trip spanned personal and official duties, including accompanying his youngest daughter to college, meeting in New York [with New York Police Department officials](#) to tour the department's facilities and gather information, and later in Washington to meet with Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett and other Congresspeople relative to the Biden administration's \$1 trillion infrastructure plan, which includes tens of millions of dollars for the territory.

Mr. Bryan will return on Aug. 26.

"It really is a matter of just sometimes we get in front of it and sometimes we don't," Mr. Motta said. "I know for some people it really is important, and for others it's not that big of a deal. And I hate to make it seem that it's not that big of a deal for us, but the only legal prescription is that we have the succession [in place]. That's really our focus; everything else we kind of just worry about as it comes and deal with on the backend. And that's not to make an excuse, I'm just being frank at letting you know what it is for us."