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Lieutenant Governor's Office Says Issue of Excessive Property Tax Bills Isolated to Timeshares; Residents Disagree

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Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach said Tuesday afternoon that the Office of the Tax Collector has concluded that timeshare owners were billed commercial property tax rates instead of residential rates, and that the office was in the process of addressing the issue.

"We are in the process of correcting that in our system, and supplemental bills will be sent to those owners," Mr. Roach told the Consortium following an inquiry.

But the lieutenant governor said there was no exorbitant year-over-year increases for residential customers, and that a case the Consortium brought to his attention regarding a residential property owner was an oddity.

"That particular case you mentioned, however, is an anomaly," Mr. Roach said. "We have not seen any evidence of bills which show exorbitant increases over the previous year. Anyone having such an issue is asked to contact the office of the Tax Collector."

Several residents reached out to the Consortium Monday stating that they had received excessive property tax bills. "I was wondering if you have heard any complaints about the 2022 property tax bills that were just sent out. My taxes went from \$1,699.52 in 2021 to \$3,205.19 in 2022. Assessed value did not change," said one resident. "I know one other friend who experienced the same and have calls into others. I haven't seen anything of the government website or in the press. I would think there will be a lot of complaints if the property taxes did double and especially with no announcement."

Another resident stated the following, "Is there any recent information about exorbitant property tax increases? I just received my 2022 bill and my small condo in Sapphire Village on St. Thomas increased approximately 400% over my previous 3 years. It seems that many other owners there are seeing the same large increases. What gives?"

On Tuesday, minutes before the lieutenant governor's responses, another property owner wrote to the Consortium, stating, "I just received my tax bill and it has increased over 500 percent. There is clearly something wrong. Please advise as to what I have to do to get this corrected!" We asked this property owner whether they owned a timeshare. "No, our property is not a timeshare," the property owner responded.

Governor Albert Bryan in response to a question from VIC on the issue said changes had been made to systems at the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

"I do know that the Lieutenant Governor's Office was in the midst of changing around different software so maybe there may be glitches, maybe [payments] for past years showing up as due. My suggestion would be to call into the office and get a read on what's going on with your tax bill," Mr. Bryan said Monday, adding, "nothing was raised."

Mr. Roach said his office as of Tuesday morning was "hoping to correct all of these issues with the new system."