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Cost-U-Less St. Thomas Said to Layoff 20 Employees Ahead of Their 90-Day Probationary Period; Sen. Frett-Gregory Calls for Investigation

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Robert Moore **January 31, 2020**

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Inside the Cost-U-Less discount store in St. Thomas By. Trip Advisor

ST. THOMAS — The popular Cost-U-Less discount store apparently laid off about 20 employees on the eve of their 90-day probationary period, rendering them ineligible for full-time benefits, the chair of the Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development said Thursday.

Sen. Donna Frett-Gregory is now calling on the Virgin Islands Department of Labor to investigate the claims made by employees of the warehouse-style store, located on the Weymouth Rhymer Highway.

“In speaking with some of the individuals impacted by this layoff, it’s clear they were caught completely off-guard,” Ms. Frett-Gregory said in a press release yesterday.

“I understand employees received benefits packages just last week, including health insurance, before they were let go—and that is most concerning,” the senator said.

“Even further, when they were hired last November, they were not told their jobs were temporary. Had the employees been informed, they would have had time to look for other jobs, or, had Cost-U-Less reached out, they would now have access to services provided through the Department of Labor to assist employees in this transition.”

The Consortium was unable to contact a representative of Cost-U-Less on St. Thomas or it’s corporate owner, the Northwest Company in Winnipeg, Canada, for comment on Thursday evening.

“As Chair of the Labor Committee, I am asking the Department of Labor to investigate this matter. ... If these individuals were not made aware this was happening and do not have access to benefits they anticipated, we need to address it—now.”

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