

33rd Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Office of Senator Kenneth L. Gittens



*The Honorable
Kenneth L. Gittens
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January 17, 2020

Honorable Jean-Pierre Oriol
Commissioner
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Charles W. Turnbull Regional Library
4607 Tutu Park Mall
St. Thomas, VI 00802

Dear Commissioner Oriol,

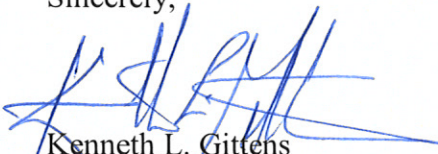
I hope this correspondence finds you in great health and spirit. I write today regarding my ongoing concerns and our previous conversations as related to the sunken vessels in the Christiansted Harbor in the district of St. Croix. These boats, some of which were likely damaged and abandoned after the 2017 hurricanes, pose a serious safety hazard to other vessels and to seaplane operations. In fact, one of these vessels is located very near the seaplane dock in the direct path of the seaplanes.

I am truly concerned that these sunken vessels could cause a serious accident in our harbor, for which the Virgin Islands Government could ultimately be held responsible. As a matter of fact, earlier this month (circa Wednesday January 8, 2020) one of the seaplanes collided with one of those sunken vessels and caused flights to be cancelled, thereby shutting down the seaport. As I informed you in our previous conversations on this matter, I strongly suggest that it is time for your Enforcement Division to take full action in having those vessels removed and billing the registered owners (or their estates, if deceased).

Again, I am respectfully requesting that your agency take immediate steps to remove this debris before someone is seriously injured or it becomes a liability to the Government of the Virgin Islands. Kindly advise on what steps, if any, that have been taken thus far or what steps are planned to address this matter.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Kenneth L. Gittens
Senator

COMMITTEE MEMBER:
Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Committee on Government
Operations, Consumer Affairs,
Energy, Environment and Planning

Committee on Education and
Workforce Development

Committee on Health, Hospitals and
Human Services

Committee on Homeland Security,
Justice, Public Safety
and Veterans' Affairs

Committee of the Whole

pc: The Honorable Alicia V. Barnes, Chairperson – Committee on Government Operations
Carlton Dowe, Executive Director – V.I. Port Authority