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Governor Bryan Implores Senators to Take Action On Mass Gatherings Law as Pandemic Continues

*Proposed Law Sent to Legislature in December in Response
To Shooting During Floatopia Party at Fort Frederik Beach*

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – Governor Albert Bryan Jr. sent a letter on Friday to Senate President Novelle Francis Jr. imploring him to get the 33rd Legislature to take action on a bill to restrict mass gatherings as the COVID-19 pandemic continues in the Virgin Islands.

Governor Bryan sent the proposed legislation to the Legislature in December in response to a shooting at the large Floatopia party at Fort Frederik Beach that left six people injured.

No action was taken on the proposed law since it was submitted, and since then, the Territory has fallen under the COVID-19 pandemic. Mass gatherings are one of the main causes for the second wave of the Coronavirus that has continued its spread throughout the Territory since the beginning of July.

“I strongly believe the Legislature’s prompt consideration and enactment of the Mas Gathering Act will strongly aid in the protection of the Virgin Islands Community during this pandemic and after,” Governor Bryan wrote in his letter to Senator Francis.

The Governor said that recent examples of problems that the Mass Gathering Act could have addressed if it had been enacted are:

- Unauthorized Organizers facilitating public parties that do not promote social distancing and allow for mass gatherings.
- Flash Crowd Mass gatherings, such as marine events on boats (“raft ups”), at beaches and in public businesses that do not promote social distancing and allow for mass gatherings.

“For these reasons, it is imperative that the Legislature consider the Mass Gathering Act,” Governor Bryan wrote in the letter to Senator Francis. “I am asking that the Legislature give this Act the prompt action previously requested, in light of the extant circumstances presently faced by law enforcement personnel.”

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