

LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Capitol Building P.O. Box 1690 Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands 00804

**ADLAH "FONGIE"
DONASTORG**
Senator, 28th Legislature

Member, Committees on:

*Financial Services,
Infrastructure and Consumer
Affairs*

*Housing, Sports
and Veterans Affairs*

*Planning and
Environmental Protection*

August 5, 2009

The Honorable John P. de Jongh
Governor
United States Virgin Islands
Government House
St. Thomas, USVI 00802

Dear Governor de Jongh,

I write this letter to you in response to your comments in regard to the apparent abandonment of the La Valle Emergency Service Center project.

While I am pleased that you indicate this project is still on the table and will soon be underway, I must say that there remains a glaring omission in comments from you and your staff – what of the promised mobile substation for St. Croix's Northshore? Nearly two years later this promise has yet to be fulfilled. Must we wait until there is a tragedy for your Administration to move forward with what should be a relatively simply endeavor?

I am concerned about what is either error on your part or a deliberate attempt to mislead the public. In today's St. Croix Avis you are quoted as saying that the La Valle substation will cost \$2.6 million dollars and that your Administration could not act until your most recent bonding issue was passed providing funding for this project. I find this strange given that the bonding issue legislation in question only provides \$275,000 – a sum less than the \$450,000 originally appropriated last summer by the 27th Legislature. Even combining these sums brings us nowhere near your figure of \$2.6 million. Is the \$275,000 to be used in addition to the \$450,000 previously appropriated or in lieu of this sum? It is imperative that you clarify this for all concerned.

Further, your Administration's lack of communication with Northshore residents is simply inexcusable. Citizens have reported numerous calls made to Government House and Public Safety that have gone unanswered and unreturned. Why did it take letters, press releases and site visits from me for you and your staff to communicate with the people of St. Croix in this important regard?

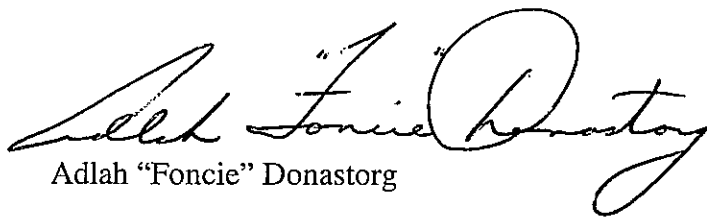
In my ongoing assessment of the Territory's Public Safety issues, I have come across repeated instances where residents felt there was inadequate communication from your Administration. For example, several citizens on the East End of St. Thomas told me that officials had pledged a permanent police presence in Red Hook, yet as of today there is an empty office across from the ferry dock and no official information available as to when this office will be in operation.

As you live well guarded behind your \$100,000 fence and elaborate alarm system at who knows what cost paid for by the people of the Virgin Islands, you may not realize the fear and uneasiness that has permeated our entire community in recent months. There is a sense of lawlessness that is extremely disconcerting and even neighborhoods once thought of as relatively safe have seen their share of violent crime. The majority of Virgin Islanders cannot afford even a fraction of your level of protection and perhaps you have grown insensitive to our plight. We must never lose sight of the fact that any Government's primary duty is to protect the life and property of its residents and, so far, you appeared to have failed at this most critical task.

I am hopeful that your recent reorganization of the Police Department will yield better results, but we cannot wait solely on long term solutions. Your Administration must, at the very least, live up to its own promises and commitments, to include the mobile substation on St. Croix's Northshore and an ongoing police presence at Red Hook on St. Thomas. Please immediately advise the people of the Virgin Islands on these two important issues and put aside the petty politics so evident in the misguided statements of your St. Croix spokesperson.

I must note your Administration's response to my request for information was highly juvenile given the seriousness of this matter. My vote on your recent Bond Bill is simply immaterial, as not only did this measure pass last month, the funding for this project was appropriated last year. Further, accusations of grandstanding are unseemly coming from a media spokesperson so obviously ill-advised in regard to your Administration's promises to the people of the Virgin Islands. Where is the substation for the Northshore? When *exactly* will it be put in place? What is the true cost of this project and where do you intend to get \$2.6 million? Who determined that \$2.6 million was necessary? Where are the officers for Red Hook? Sir, the people await your response and require your protection.

Sincerely,



Adlah "Foncie" Donastorg

Cc: Novelle Francis, Police Commissioner