



LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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

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

Member, Committees on:

*Financial Services,
Infrastructure and Consumer
Affairs*

*Housing, Sports
and Veterans Affairs*

*Planning and
Environmental Protection*

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Law makers or law breakers?

Donastorg urges Senate Majority to take corrective action to comply with Federal and local environmental laws

ST. THOMAS – Senator Adlah “Foncie” Donastorg has asked Senate President Hill to consult with experts in order to mitigate any environmental damage as a result of the creation of an artificial beach and filling in of the harbor surrounding the St. Thomas Legislature building.

Over the holiday weekend the Legislature improperly filled in a portion of the harbor and dumped sand from an unknown source over the rocky shoreline in order to create a beach area in front of the Legislature grounds. Depositing fill material and dumping sand are in violation of Coastal Zone Management regulations and local and Federal water pollution control laws.

“I was shocked to see this as I know that the institution did not have and most likely could not get permits for such an action,” Donastorg said. “I authored and sponsored our local Water Pollution Control Act and I know the danger such irresponsible filling and dumping pose to our marine resources. Charlotte Amalie Harbor is precious to us and we cannot jeopardize its beauty with irresponsible construction or dumping.”

The Senator said that the water quality of the harbor could be negatively affected and that the sand would quickly be washed away.

“These laws and regulations exist for good reason,” Donastorg said. “It is irresponsible and hypocritical for us as a the First Branch of Government to be blatantly violating the very laws we create – are the senators behind these illegal actions law makers or law breakers?”

Donastorg said that in addition to degrading the environment, the Legislature was now subject to criminal and civil penalties, to including local fines of up to \$10,000 per day. Federal penalties include jail time.

“I do understand the need to improve parking conditions for employees and make our facility more attractive, but surely there was a better way to go about this,” Donastorg said. “Any such action on our shorelines requires proper study and permits. You can’t just bring in a dump truck over the weekend.”

The Senate Majority recently added an extra \$1 million to its budget, a move Donastorg opposed. He proposed that the million should be divided between the neglected flood control project in Estate Nadir and the planned emergency services center on St. Croix’s Northshore.

In a letter to Senate President Louis Hill sent Wednesday, Donastorg wrote that the funds would have been much better spent on improving the lives of constituents.

“Instead this money has been used to create an illegal, environmentally hazardous, artificial beach,” Donastorg said. “This would almost be funny if it were not so ecologically detrimental. I am urging Senator Hill to immediately meet with DPNR officials in order to determine the best course of