

Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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Senator-At-Large
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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Committee on Housing, Transportation, & Telecommunication
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Senator-At-Large Bolques Comments on Rapid Response of VIFEMS in Recent Fire Incident, Cites Allocation of Funds for New Fire Trucks as Key to Success

VIRGIN ISLANDS – In a commendable demonstration of their efficiency and dedication, the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services (VIFEMS) swiftly responded to a structural fire incident in Enighed, St. John, preventing a potential catastrophe within just one hour of receiving the emergency call. The blaze, which occurred at an unoccupied residence, was contained with no reported injuries, thanks to the prompt action taken by the VIFEMS personnel.

This successful firefighting operation was made possible by the availability of two new Type-3 pumper fire trucks, a direct result of the tireless efforts of Senator-At-Large Angel Bolques Jr. and other members of the 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands. In September 2022, Senator Bolques championed the appropriation of \$600,000 to acquire these specialized vehicles, specifically designed to navigate the narrow streets of St. John, where conventional fire trucks face significant challenges.

Senator Bolques recognized the urgent need for these fire trucks after a devastating apartment fire earlier that year. The incident in the Grunwald area of St. John highlighted the life-threatening obstacles faced by first responders due to the island's unique geography and topography. Normal-sized fire trucks struggled to navigate the narrow streets, underscoring the critical necessity of specialized equipment.

"I felt compelled to champion getting our firemen the best resources available so that our first responders are well-equipped to service our unique geography and topography," stated Senator Bolques. He went on to express his gratitude to Fire Chief Clarence Stephenson, Senator Marvin Blyden, and Senator Dwayne DeGraff for their unwavering support and advocacy in ensuring the success of this important initiative.

The allocation of funds for the two Type-3 pumper fire trucks has proven to be a game-changer for the VIFEMS, enabling them to respond rapidly and effectively to emergencies in St. John. The recent fire incident in Enighed is a testament to this investment's tangible impact, as firefighters were able to access the scene swiftly and prevent the spread of the fire.

St. John Deputy Chief of Operations Magabe Calixte and the firefighters of VIFEMS received special acknowledgment for their pivotal roles in coordinating the firefighting efforts and ensuring the safety of the community during the Enighed incident. Their dedication and leadership exemplify the spirit of collaboration and commitment that defines the VIFEMS.

In conclusion, Senator-At-Large Bolques sincerely appreciates the VIFEMS and the Virgin Islands Police Department for their unwavering support and collaboration during this operation. The safety and well-being of the Virgin Islands residents remain a top priority, and Senator Bolques remains dedicated to advancing initiatives that ensure the highest level of emergency response services for all.

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