

Dead on Arrival

November 15, 2007

The most recent proposal by the VI Waste Management Authority reflects a lack of vision and a lack of understanding of the financial burden this legislation would place on the businesses & residents of the Territory.

With an onerous and continuously climbing cost-of-living which leaves Virgin Islanders virtually penniless at the end of each month, what could the Authority have been thinking?

We accept that the current situation is unacceptable and that the solid waste issue needs to be dealt with. We recognize that the Authority lacks resources to keep our Territorial waters, roadways & beaches from being littered with trash.

We're not criticizing the mission but we are criticizing the methodology they've chosen to solve it.

The fees that are being proposed to fund this program are, plain and simply, nothing but a new tax. If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and walks like a duck, it's a duck.

In all the studies that have been done, here and in other jurisdictions, the most effective time-tested method for resolving solid waste issues has been recycling. By doing so you make every resident a stakeholder; we are no longer a part of the problem, we become part of the solution.

Why aren't we separating our cans, glass bottles & paper from each other? Elsewhere waste is being recycled into useful purposes such as glass being ground into asphalt paving; plastic is being reused as synthetic lumber products; paper is being re-manufactured into an array of new paper products and aluminum cans make new aluminum products.

More importantly, with the cost of electricity being what it is, other miscellaneous trash can be burned and used as a cheap energy source to generate electricity.

Unfortunately, in recent years, a power-generating facility was proposed by a viable company which was, sadly, rejected by WAPA.

This also would have had the added advantage of solving our land-fill problem. We would have been burning our solid waste, not burying it.

Each of these forms of trash which are recycled can generate income which moves us away from the Waste Management Authority's tax solution to a more self-funding approach.

We can finance the solution by being smart and using what is already here; we can accomplish it by having every Virgin Islander contribute to this effort.

Remember, politics is not a spectator sport, it is not our intention to tear down, rather this editorial was written to stimulate thought and to encourage you, as residents, to become part of the solution, for you to suggest other avenues and for you to stay engaged as this most important public policy initiative is being formulated.