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Governor Bryan meets with WICO, VI Port Authority

Governor considering alternate funding source to expedite harbor dredging projects in St. Croix and St. Thomas

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS— Governor Albert Bryan Jr. met with the leadership of both the West Indian Company Limited (WICO) and Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) on Thursday to discuss plans for moving forward with the harbor dredging projects in Charlotte Amalie and Gallows Bay.

Governor Bryan expressed the importance of moving forward with the dredging projects which have been awaiting federal action to keep pace with the cruise industry and its move toward larger vessels. The Governor said he is considering several financial options to expedite the dredging process in Gallows Bay on St. Croix and the St. Thomas Harbor.

"This is a vital and strategic step for the Territory's economic development and to help our small businesses remain prepared to offer the best experience possible for cruise passengers when they visit the industry's top destination," Governor Bryan said. "While we still would need approval from the Army Corps of Engineers for the structural portion of the dredging projects, we could significantly speed things up by making the funding available now rather than wait on the federal funding process."

Regarding the St. Thomas dredging project, it is critical to deepen the turning basin and mouth of the harbor for access to the WICO dock for the largest cruise ships. Currently, the WICO dock can accommodate only one Oasis-class cruise ship, which holds about 6,000 people.

According to information brought up during the meeting, the dredging of St. Thomas Harbor will increase the economy of scale for the Territory to handle more of the larger ships simultaneously, boosting capacity about 200% to allow up to three Oasis-class ships to dock simultaneously.

The Gallows Bay dredging project also is crucial to the Bryan-Roach Administrations plans to increase the number of cruise calls to St. Croix and allowing small ships to dock in Christiansted, as well as larger vessels at the Anne Abramson Marine Facility in Frederiksted.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is investing in the Territory's people, infrastructure and future through transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov

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