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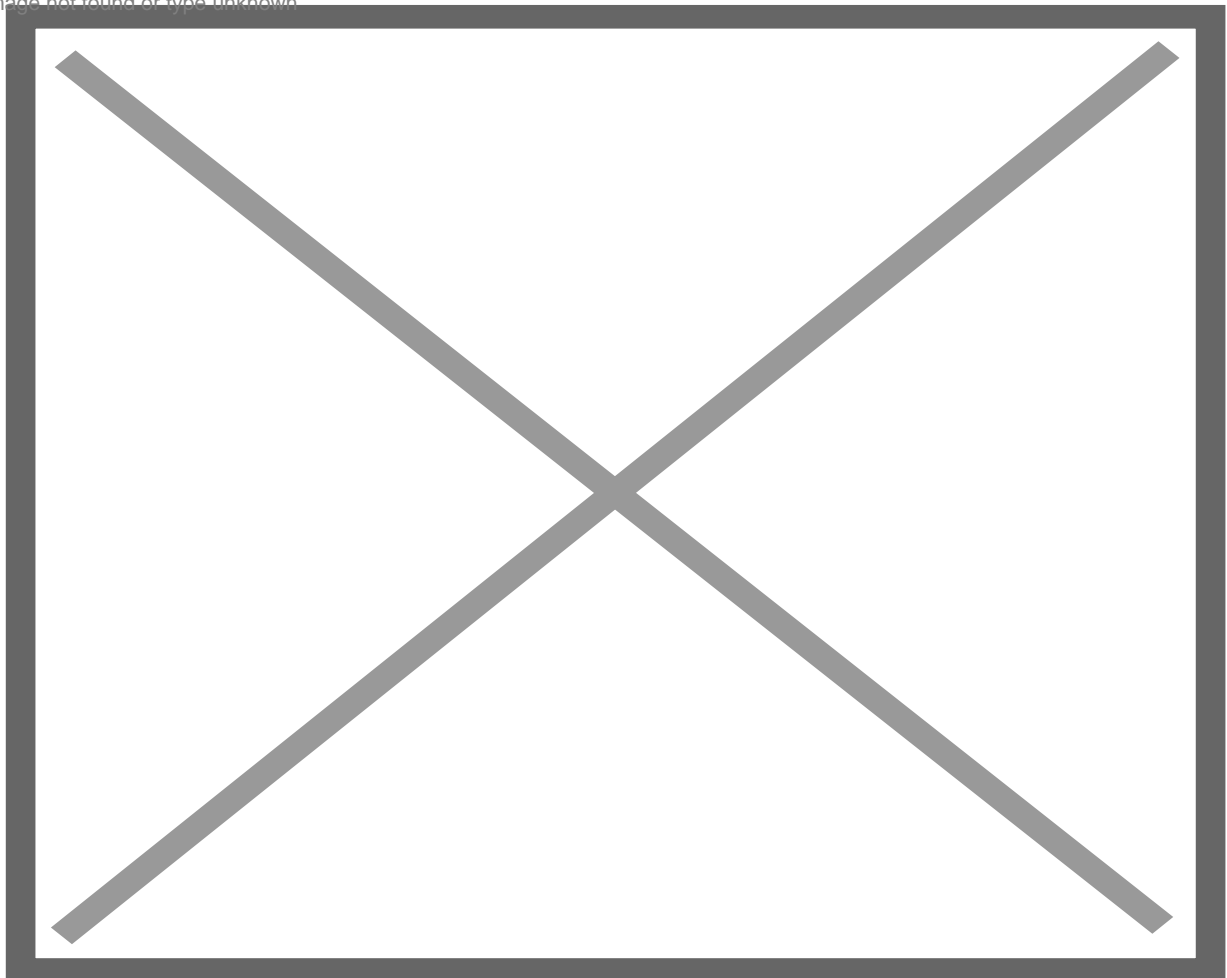
V.I. Port Authority Signs Longterm Agreement With Tropical Shipping For Port Rehabilitation and Expansion

VIPA and Tropical Shipping ink deal for major port upgrades in USVI

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V.I. Port Authority and Tropical Shipping officials signed agreements on January 22 that ensure the shipping giant will serve the U.S. Virgin Islands for the next 30-plus years.
By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Port Authority has officially entered into agreements with Tropical Shipping to significantly advance the rehabilitation and expansion of two major ports in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The agreements, focusing on the Crown Bay Cargo Port in St. Thomas and the Wilfred Bomba Allick Port and Transshipment Center in Krause Lagoon, St. Croix, were signed on January 22, 2024.

VIPA Executive Director Carlton Dowe and Tropical Shipping President Timothy P. Martin finalized the long-term lease agreements at a meeting held at Tropical's headquarters in Riviera Beach, Florida. These agreements grant Tropical Shipping the continuation of its commercial and containerized shipping, warehousing, and related administrative activities at both ports for a term of 25 years, with options for two additional five-year renewals.

Tropical Shipping has been an integral part of the territory's maritime operations since 1976. The new agreements come as part of VIPA's successful collaboration with Tropical Shipping and Crowley Caribbean Services, leading to a significant grant from the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD). In October 2020, a grant of \$21.9 million was awarded to modernize the Crown Bay Sandfill Cargo facility in St. Thomas. This grant aims to repair and upgrade cargo handling and storage infrastructure at the facility.

Further boosting the maritime infrastructure, MARAD announced an additional \$22 million grant in November 2023 for the Wilfred "Bomba" Allick Port and Transshipment Center in St. Croix. This funding is designated for the rehabilitation of the bulkhead, restoration of the concrete apron, reconstruction of cargo storage areas, and security enhancements, including improved lighting, fencing, and fire protection systems.

During their visit to Tropical Shipping's headquarters, VIPA officials discussed the Crown Bay Sandfill Improvement Project and the new vision for the Wilfred "Bomba" Allick Port and Transshipment Center. They also toured the rum transportation facilities.

Executive Director Dowe mentioned that the agreement with Crowley is currently under review and anticipates its full execution in the first quarter of 2024.