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Dept. of Tourism to Contact Law Enforcement and Seek Additional Legal Options to Remove Fake Facebook Page

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The V.I. Department of Tourism said Saturday that it has contacted Facebook's legal department and cybersecurity agencies about the existence of a fake Facebook page that continues to spread misinformation while purporting to represent the territory's tourism authorities.

D.O.T Commissioner Joseph Boschulte confirmed that communication was sent to Facebook's legal department requesting its assistance with the removal of the imposter page, as it violates Facebook's community standards, infringes upon the department's intellectual property rights, and poses a security and safety concern for the destination.

The page, captioned "USVI Department of Tourism" and located at <https://www.facebook.com/USVI-Department-of-Tourism-107539267395429>, is fake and malicious. The public is cautioned not to interact with this page, D.O.T. said.

A quick glance of the page shows posts that appear satirical, but is damaging to the territory's tourism brand. The latest post, published on Friday, mocks the serious coronavirus epidemic by recommending other beers over Corona Beer. It reads, "Due to increased pressure from the CDC, the USVI Department of Tourism would like to urge residents and visitor alike to cease purchasing Corona beer immediately. To keep our islands safe and fun, please wait until time when we are sure it is safe. It's for the safety of our children. Until then, try a delicious ELEPHANT beer! Guaranteed Corona-free."

Mr. Boschulte stated that community efforts to use Facebook's website tool to request the removal of the fake pages have not been successful. Therefore, the department will now escalate its communications with law enforcement and explore additional legal options. Cybercrime is a federal offense that is punishable by law.

The Department of Tourism's official Facebook page is located at www.facebook.com/VisitUSVI. The correct social media handles are Instagram (@visitusvi) and Twitter (@usvitourism).