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VIGL Ordered to Testify on St. Croix Racetrack as Lawmakers Demand Answers

The 35th Legislature has subpoenaed VIGL Operations LLC and its CFO Andrew Dubuque to clarify ongoing delays and provide a comprehensive update on the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack in St. Croix, a project mired in setbacks

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The current site of the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack after the original facility was demolished. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

A motion by Senator Angel Bolques Jr. to subpoena VIGL Operations LLC and its chief financial officer and managing partner Andrew Dubuque to appear before the 35th Legislature in September was the first order of business during Friday's meeting of the Senate Committee on

Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports and Parks.

The order to appear before the territory's lawmaking arm concerns the lack of information surrounding ongoing work to revitalize the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack on St. Croix, which has languished in disrepair, confusion and delays for nearly a decade. The issues started almost immediately following an agreement that was reached between the government under the Mapp administration [in 2016 with VIGL](#), which stipulated that the company rebuild both the St. Croix race track and the Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack on St. Thomas. However, after [a lengthy court battle](#) between the GVI and Southland Gaming, the deal was eventually dismantled for a new plan: Southland Gaming would fund the development of the race track in St. Thomas, while VIGL would be responsible for St. Croix's. In 2022, [legislation](#) that authorized Southland Gaming to pay for repairs at the St. Thomas facility passed, and horse racing [returned to St. Thomas](#) in May 2024. Also in 2022, Governor Bryan [signed a new deal](#) with VIGL to construct a horse racing facility in St. Croix.

This agreement and a subsequent [appropriation of \\$5 million](#) for construction purposes also signaled the end of [legal challenges](#) and other operational hindrances that delayed the project's commencement. But two years on, horsemen are still unable to race. Although a press release from VIGL in late July stated that construction would [begin in earnest in September](#), lawmakers want further updates.

According to the terms of the subpoena, when VIGL appears before the Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports and Parks on September 20th, the company's testimony must include "the current status and timeline of the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack construction, detailed financial expenditures, budget allocations and future projections for racetrack operations." Additionally, testifiers must inform lawmakers and the people of the Virgin Islands of any challenges encountered during development, and all planned strategies to address them.

Mr. Bolques has also requested that VIGL detail "community engagement efforts, including stakeholder meetings and public consultations and economic impact analysis of the racetrack on our local economy." He also requires the company to produce all compliance documents including [relevant permits](#), regulatory approvals and communication with local and federal agencies.

Further, the Legislature is interested in "future operation plans and expected milestones, including timelines for completion of different phases of the project, the procurement process of materials and services, including local hiring efforts and contracting with local businesses."

Finally, VIGL must outline safety and security measures at the racetrack, and emergency production during and after construction. All of these details must be captured in "comprehensive written testimony" to be submitted alongside supporting documents no less than 72 hours before the hearing.

The move to subpoena the casino management company is expected to bring new clarity to the status of the culturally relevant sport of horseracing on St. Croix. While the motion did not receive the support of Senator Franklin Johnson, it garnered sufficient votes to be put into effect. Interestingly enough, in 2022, Mr. Johnson encouraged then-committee chair Senator Samuel Carrion [to subpoena VIGL representatives](#) and others who did not attend a hearing on key horse racing updates.