

logo not found or type unknown

St. John Taxi Services Corporation Moves Closer to 20-Year Lease Despite Continued Opposition

The Senate's Budget Committee advanced a 20-yr lease for the St. John Taxi Services Corp., despite objections from independent drivers who warned the agreement could create a monopoly at the Cruz Bay taxi stand and restrict their ability to operate freely

Government / **Published On November 05, 2025 06:18 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **November 05, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



Cruz Bay taxi stand, St. John.

The St. John Taxi Services Corporation is one step closer to securing a 20-year lease from the V.I. Department of Property and Procurement after the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance voted in favor of the measure on Tuesday.

Bill 36-0092, sponsored by Senator Angel Bolques, was [held in committee](#) when it was first discussed in June. At the time, independent taxi drivers who operate in Cruz Bay were opposed to granting a lease to a single taxi association. Lawmakers were also skeptical about the Corporation's plan to charge independent drivers double the cost of members, and expressed misgivings about internal structures and processes.

When the bill returned to committee for its second hearing, Bolques reminded lawmakers that the Corporation has operated without a lease for an extended time. He argued that this arrangement left them in "a stagnant capability, with little ability to invest, grow or modernize operations." Approving the lease, he said, provides the "foundational legal framework" to establish infrastructure like a dispatch booth and signage.

"This lease is long overdue. They've waited long enough," Sen. Bolques declared.

Sean Claxton, the Corporation's president, returned to the Legislature on Tuesday where he proudly announced that there had been "significant progress in strengthening the organizational structure." A board of directors and disciplinary council have been established, and the Corporation has grown by two members. The Corporation also submitted its amended articles of incorporation and updated bylaws to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor in October.

"The stability of a long term lease remains essential to achieving our long term goals," Mr. Claxton said, pleading for a more positive outcome.

Lawmakers would, however, also have to consider the perspective of independent operator Carmen Wesselhoft. Like the first hearing, Ms. Wesselhoft was unable to attend, and her written testimony was read into the record. It was identical to that dictated in June.

She argued that the Cruz Bay taxi stand was designated as a public taxi stand so that "we are all given an equal opportunity to operate fairly and equally without fear of bullying, personal vendettas or personal conflicts." Ms. Wesselhoft reminded lawmakers that on St. John, there are "only two areas of operation for taxi drivers."

St. John is too small and limited in choices to operate from to give one group a lease for 20 years," Ms. Wesselhoft's letter read.

Mr. Claxton refuted any accusation of disenfranchisement. "We are not there to stop anyone from coming to work. You can come to work everyday, as long as you abide by the rules," he told Senator Marvin Blyden, who referenced the letter of opposition.

According to Mr. Claxton, all independent drivers who operate from the Corporation's stand are required to wear a plain orange shirt. Independent logos and cell phone numbers are not permissible. Both Senator Blyden and Ray Fonseca took issue with that arrangement.

"I have a real problem with that. That's restriction," said Sen. Fonseca. Mr. Claxton countered that they would be "competing within our organization." Sen. Fonseca wasn't convinced, and he was ultimately the only senator to vote against Bill 36-0092.

Senator Blyden, who appreciated the desire for uniformity, still felt that the rules mean independent operators are "excluded."

Mr. Claxton seemed to acquiesce, stating that "if that is going to prevent St. John Taxi Association from getting the 20-year lease...put your name on your shirt." Sen. Blyden ultimately voted in

favor of granting the lease, along with a majority of the lawmakers present. It now moves to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further action.

The substance of the lease has not changed, as stated by Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner at the Department of Property and Procurement. Annual rent payments for the first two years will remain at \$9,600 each. In the third and fourth years, the rent will increase to \$12,000. In the fifth year, the corporation will be billed \$14,400, all payable in monthly installments.

The Corporation charges fees to all users of the stand, including independent members who will pay a higher cost. Mr. Claxton is hoping that independent drivers will all eventually join the association and reap the added benefits.

© Viconsortium 2025