

The Virgin Islands Consortium

After Dominica Success, VIPA Looks to Expand Contour Service to Connect St. Croix and Saint Lucia

Port Authority officials say Contour Airlines' St. Thomas–Dominica service has exceeded expectations, prompting discussions on a potential St. Croix–Saint Lucia route tied to historical migration, tourism demand, and growing regional connectivity.

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The V.I. Port Authority is hoping for the establishment of a second “down-island” air connection by Contour Airlines following the [success of their St. Thomas-Dominica route](#). “In a short space of time, the activity that they have seen between Dominica and St. Thomas has been beyond what they expected,” VIPA Executive Director Carlton Dowe told members of the agency's Governing Board.

During his report to board members on Wednesday, Dowe attributed the [strong showing of Contour's thrice-weekly service](#) from the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas to the Douglas-Charles Airport in Dominica to the historical migratory ties between the two islands. Replace Dominica with Saint Lucia, and “you had a similar thing happening in St. Croix with the refinery,” noted Mr. Dowe.

Therefore, he concluded, it would be “a good thing to have Contour consider doing a St. Croix-Saint Lucia route.” Airline officials were in the territory last week and met with a high-level USVI delegation including Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Tourism Commissioner Jenifer Matarangas-King, Mr. Dowe disclosed. The issue was raised then.

“We had a conference call with the deputy premier of tourism out of Saint Lucia,” he continued, referring to Saint Lucia's Minister of Tourism Ernest Hilaire, often designated the country's Deputy Prime Minister. That call had to be terminated early due to insurmountable technical difficulties, but Mr. Dowe assured board members that “we expect it to continue, probably within the next two weeks.”

Because “the Legislature would have to play a role” in any agreement the Government of the Virgin Islands came to regarding that route, Senator Kurt Vialet has also been involved “in several meetings with VIPA regarding the Contour STX-SLU route,” Mr. Dowe told Consortium journalists following Wednesday's board meeting.

During the proceedings, longstanding board member Celestino White applauded Mr. Dowe's efforts, arguing that “we have to make a big push...we have not been connecting these islands properly.” He stressed that tourists who visit the Virgin Islands from other Caribbean nations tend to be relatively high spenders, and White urged the executive director to encourage more such linkages from other airlines. He suggested ensuring that future meetings of this nature include board members as well. “Maybe we can do a little more pulling and get them to say yes,” he suggested, pointing to the persuasive talents of VIPA Chair Willard John.

The sizable Saint Lucian community in St. Croix was established during the height of the island's petroleum refining era. Even today, many retain active ties to their home country, celebrating important dates on Saint Lucia's national calendar. Most recently, “Crucian-Lucians” [organized a motorcade through the streets](#) of St. Croix to honor Saint Lucia's first Olympic medallist Julien Alfred, [who won gold](#) in the Women's 100m at the 2024 Olympics in Paris, and silver in the 200m event that same year.