

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Administration, Lawmakers Take United Front Against BVI Trade Fees

Citing higher costs for consumers and businesses, the USVI government is escalating its response to BVI trade charges through federal channels, drawing on a new trade report and years of documented commercial friction.

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Road Town, Tortola. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Legislature have taken a unified stance against newly increased trade fees imposed by the British Virgin Islands, describing the charges as an unreasonable barrier to commerce and signaling a

coordinated push for federal engagement and potential local countermeasures.

According to a statement issued Thursday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. recently met with members of the Legislature to address a range of issues affecting the territory, with the BVI trade fees emerging as a central concern. Government House officials said the increased charges raise costs for Virgin Islands residents and place local businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

Officials described the fees as functioning as a disproportionate and unreasonable trade barrier. Legislators expressed support for a firm response, including the possible consideration of increased fees or other economic measures by the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Governor Bryan said the matter has been elevated beyond the territorial level. "This is not just a territorial concern. It is a federal trade matter," the governor said. "We have formally engaged our partners at the Department of Commerce to ensure these actions receive the scrutiny they deserve and are corrected through proper federal processes."

Government House said the administration has engaged federal partners, supported by a recently completed [trade report](#) that documents the economic impacts of the BVI fees. Officials said the report characterizes the fees as a non-tariff trade barrier and provides an analytical basis for federal review and corrective action.

The latest escalation follows years of reported trade friction between the U.S. Virgin Islands and the British Virgin Islands, which The V.I. Consortium has previously documented. Past reporting highlighted concerns raised by USVI merchants, shippers, and officials over increased costs, port access issues, and regulatory barriers affecting the movement of goods between the neighboring territories. Those earlier disputes similarly prompted calls for policy changes and federal involvement, underscoring that the current fee increases represent a continuation of longstanding commercial tensions rather than an isolated development.

During the meeting, leaders also discussed potential local responses to the BVI's actions, though no specific measures were announced.

Beyond trade, the meeting addressed pending legislation being developed in response to a recent federal lawsuit involving firearm licensure and access to firearms in the territory. Governor Bryan and legislative leaders said the goal is to advance legislation that responds to federal concerns while preserving public safety and territorial authority.

"Our goal is compliance with the law and common sense protections that keep our community and our law enforcement officers safe," the governor said.

The discussion also covered the financial stability of semi-autonomous public entities, including the territory's hospitals, the Waste Management Authority, and the V.I. Water and Power Authority. Officials said the focus remains on stabilizing finances, improving access to capital, and strengthening essential services.

"We are being deliberate about long-term stability," Governor Bryan said. "Sound fiscal planning is critical to protecting essential services and ensuring institutional resilience."

The meeting concluded with Governor Bryan and members of the Legislature reaffirming their commitment to continued collaboration. "This was a productive meeting," the

governor said. “We have clear next steps and a shared responsibility to act in the best interest of the people of the Virgin Islands.”

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