The Virgin Islands Consortium

# Another Shift as Bryan Signals New Public-Private Path for Randall “Doc” James Racetrack

## In his final SOTA, Governor Bryan outlined plans to revive the racetrack through a public-private partnership, proposed gaming commission consolidation, and new legislation after years of delays, shifts, and ultimately the termination of the VIGL contract

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**Randall “Doc” James Racetrack in June 2015 before it was demolished.** **By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.**

While Governor Albert Bryan Jr. did not discuss the Paul E. Joseph Stadium in his final State of the Territory Address, he did update the Virgin Islands public on plans for the

Randall “Doc” James Racetrack.

The project has long been bogged down by delays that have stifled horse racing on the Big Island. In March 2025, the Government of the Virgin Islands terminated its contract with VIGL LLC and officially regained legal control of the racetrack on St. Croix.

Later that year, Governor Bryan backed a measure that would allocate $5 million for renovations to the racetrack. Senator Kurt Vialet was the only one who did not support the bill when it was heard in the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance.

On Monday, the governor announced new plans for the Randall “Doc” James Racetrack, hinged on a private-public-partnership model comparable to the arrangement with Southland Gaming at the Clinton E. Phipps racetrack on St. Thomas.

The arrangement, however, is poised to be “bigger.”

“Under that framework, we can expect to see real investment in the rebuilding of the Randall “Doc” James Racetrack,” he promised. Governor Bryan intends to submit legislation next month that he says will “bring this long-standing tradition back to life.”

In drafting that legislation, Mr. Bryan explained that “we saw the need to consolidate the entities that regulate gaming in the territory.” To that end, he has asked the Legislature to support a proposal to merge the Virgin Islands Lottery and Casino Control Commissions.

Gaming revenues are currently regulated through these two separate entities. VI Lottery generates proceeds from “traditional lottery games and video lottery terminals,” said a Government House statement announcing the merger. Net revenues after prizes, commissions, and operating costs bolster the general fund and are used for education, youth, and community programs.

The Casino Control Commission, on the other hand, collects casino gaming revenues for casino taxes, licensing fees, and fines. These funds support regulatory enforcement, public safety, education, youth sports, agriculture, health services, tourism promotion, and racetrack operations.

It is the administration’s view that a single, unified regulator will result in “one rulebook, consistent enforcement, and lower administrative costs.” Governor Bryan anticipates that it will create a “dedicated revenue stream to support racetrack operations, youth sports, and cultural programs.”

He addressed lawmakers in the room, stating that he looks forward to the “quick passage of that legislation.”

In his analysis of the SoTA, however, Senator Franklin Johnson expressed some doubt. “It’s not gonna work that way,” he said, assessing the proposed partnership.

Nonetheless, horse racing enthusiasts in St. Croix will undoubtedly keep a keen eye on these proposals. There was no word from Governor Bryan on whether the $5 million cash infusion approved by the Legislature will now be directed toward the proposed P3 arrangement.