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VIPA Reports Fuel Spill and \$2.1M in Military-Related Repairs at Rohlsen Airport; Hydrocarbon Contamination Complicates Apron Project

Board members were told military operations at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport led to a fuel spill, and \$2.1 million in reimbursable repairs, while a larger-than-expected area of hydrocarbon contamination beneath phase four may delay apron completion at Rohlsen.

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A military tanker/transport jet at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on Dec. 3, 2025. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. CROIX — V.I. Port Authority officials told the board Wednesday that military activity at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport has led to about \$2.1 million in repair work tied to impacts on airfield

pavement, while fuel spills associated with those operations have also required environmental response and monitoring.

During the board meeting, board members asked whether military activity at the airport had been causing issues with the runway or other airfield areas. VIPA responded that it had executed a memorandum of agreement with the military covering operational impacts to airport pavement and said about \$2.1 million in repair work had already been completed and submitted for reimbursement.

Officials also said there have been operational concerns involving fuel spills linked to military activity. In one instance, fuel ran into an open excavation associated with construction work. VIPA said environmental monitoring services were brought in to ensure contamination was not spreading, and officials said all cleanup, monitoring, testing and sampling costs tied to such incidents are subject to reimbursement under the memorandum of agreement.

The military-related update came as VIPA also reported that hydrocarbon contamination discovered beneath phase four of the apron rehabilitation project at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport appears more extensive than first anticipated, creating a potential impact on the schedule for full completion of the job.

According to VIPA's engineering division, phases one, two and three of the apron rehabilitation project have been substantially completed and are already open for use. The remaining issue is tied to hydrocarbon-contaminated soils found beneath phase four.

VIPA said it has already worked with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Federal Aviation Administration on a remediation methodology, and that the board had previously authorized a change order to the contractor related to that work.

However, as remediation began, officials said the apparent boundaries and limits of the contamination proved to be much larger than expected. Additional sampling is now underway, and VIPA said it will return to DPNR to determine a path forward once results confirm the extent of the impacted area and the levels of hydrocarbon contamination present.

Even with that complication, VIPA said paving work on the first three phases is complete and those sections are in active use, leaving only the final phase still to be finished.

The contamination update was part of a broader St. Croix aviation report delivered to the board. VIPA also said the Taxiway Alpha and Bravo rehabilitation project is now in closeout, with all scope of work and final punch list items completed. Final payment was issued last week, according to the update, and closeout documents have been submitted to the FAA.

The St. Croix report further noted that the engineering division is currently working on six active construction projects in the district, with one of those already in the closeout phase. VIPA said the total amount obligated under active construction projects in St. Croix stands at \$36,290,512.76, with about \$5.4 million in work still left to complete.