

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Seeks Temporary Variance as Coast Guard Orders Threaten Key Cargo Route to Virgin Islands

With Water Spirit and Admirals Pride ordered to stop Mediterranean-style mooring at Pier 10 in San Juan, Bryan says the territory must protect maritime safety while preserving a route relied on by families, grocery stores, contractors and businesses.

Economy / **Published On May 18, 2026 05:30 PM /**

Staff Consortium **May 18, 2026**



The Admirals Pride sits docked in port alongside other vessels, as officials seek a Coast Guard meeting over orders affecting cargo ships that move essential goods between Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands supply chain.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. is set to meet with the U.S. Coast Guard over recent orders affecting two cargo vessels that help move essential goods between Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as concerns grow over the potential disruption of a long-standing route used by residents, businesses, grocery stores, contractors and retailers.

According to Government House, the U.S. Coast Guard has agreed to meet with Mr. Bryan following a recent letter in which the governor requested a collaborative effort among the Coast Guard, the Government of the Virgin Islands, cargo operators and other appropriate partners. The goal, according to the administration, is to address safety concerns without cutting off a cargo route that supports the movement of food, refrigerated goods, vehicles, appliances, construction materials, industrial parts, household items and other essential goods.

The matter centers on Captain of the Port orders issued on April 30, directing the M/V Water Spirit II and BVI M/V Admirals Pride to stop their current Mediterranean-style mooring operations at Pier 10 in San Juan. Mr. Bryan is asking the Coast Guard to consider a temporary variance that would allow the vessels to continue operating while all parties work toward a safe, practical and lasting solution.

The issue follows recent concerns surrounding Water Spirit Freight Services VI, Inc., after the V.I. Port Authority said it had been notified that the vessel operated by Water Spirit was prohibited from docking in Puerto Rico by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Puerto Rico Ports Authority because of safety regulations within San Juan Harbor. VIPA said at the time that the matter was specific to the Port of San Juan and did not involve VIPA, which has no jurisdiction over port regulations in Puerto Rico.

The concern has also [drawn attention](#) from Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, whose office said it had been engaged with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Puerto Rico Ports Authority, Water Spirit and local officials as stakeholders sought a path forward to protect cargo movement between the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Tortola and the wider Caribbean.

Mr. Bryan said the matter requires urgency because the affected vessels support a route that many in the territory depend on daily.

“We respect the Coast Guard’s authority and we share its commitment to maritime safety,” Governor Bryan said. “At the same time, we have to recognize the real-world impact this decision could have on the people of the Virgin Islands. This route moves food, refrigerated goods, vehicles, appliances, construction materials, industrial parts and household items that our residents and businesses rely on. We are asking for a fair opportunity to work through the issue together without cutting off an essential service before a workable alternative is in place.”

The governor’s request focuses on two immediate steps: allowing the vessels to continue operating temporarily while safety and mooring concerns are addressed, and bringing the appropriate parties together to identify a solution that is safe, practical and workable for all involved.

“This is the kind of issue that requires partnership, urgency and common sense,” Governor Bryan said. “Our goal is simple. Keep the waterway safe, keep commerce

moving and keep essential goods flowing to the people of the Virgin Islands. I believe we can do all three if we sit down together and work toward an amicable solution.”

Mr. Bryan said the issue extends beyond vessel operations and directly affects a supply chain tied to the cost, availability and timely movement of goods across the territory. A sudden disruption, he said, could have consequences for residents waiting on household items, businesses filling orders, grocery stores stocking shelves and contractors trying to keep projects moving.

“This is exactly the kind of bread-and-butter issue that government has to stay on top of,” Governor Bryan said. “When a decision has the potential to affect what reaches our stores, our job sites, our businesses and our homes, we have a responsibility to step in, bring the right people together and work toward a solution before the impact is felt by the public.”