

Revised Horse Racing Deal Adds Five-Year SGVI Commitment, Removes Full Tax Exemption and Doubles St. Thomas-St. John Share

Bryan's horse racing package requires SGVI to remain promoter for at least five years, removes a full gross receipts tax exemption for track events, adds quarterly gaming revenue reporting and doubles St. Thomas-St. John horsemen's share from 3% to 6%.

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has submitted a revised horse racing agreement to the 36th Legislature that now requires SGVI to remain the promoter of horse racing for at least five years, removes a proposed full gross receipts tax exemption for entertainment activities at the racetracks, adds quarterly gaming revenue reporting, and doubles the St.

Thomas-St. John Horsemen Association's racino revenue share from 3% to 6%.

The revised proposal advances a plan to rebuild the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack on St. Croix and support the operation of the Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack on St. Thomas. It follows concerns raised after the original agreement was transmitted to the Legislature on April 28, 2026.

The proposal is centered on a public-private partnership with SGVI, Inc., formerly known as Southland Gaming of the VI. Government House said the amended submission should be reviewed as a coordinated package of interrelated documents intended to support the restoration and long-term operation of horse racing in the territory.

Among the changes, the revised agreement requires Southland Gaming to remain the promoter of horse racing for a minimum of five years, a provision Government House said was requested by horsemen. It also removes the proposed full exemption from gross receipts taxes for entertainment activities conducted at the racetracks.

The revised agreement also requires quarterly reporting by SGVI regarding gaming revenue to the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation, the Legislature, the Horse Racing Commission, and the recognized Horsemen's Organization. It further provides for quarterly disbursement of proceeds to the recognized Horsemen's Organizations in each district.

Government House said the revised agreement also doubles the contribution to the St. Thomas-St. John Horsemen Association from 3% to 6% of revenue generated by the racino at the Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack.

"These are meaningful revisions that directly respond to the concerns raised during our discussions," Governor Bryan said. "We listened to the horsemen, worked with Southland Gaming and considered the feedback of the Legislature. The result is a stronger and more balanced agreement."

The original agreement proposed the rebuilding and operation of the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack and a unified framework supporting horse racing at both that facility and the Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack.

After concerns were raised, Governor Bryan invited the territory's horsemen associations, members of the Legislature and other stakeholders to submit specific objections and proposed revisions.

In his July 1 transmittal letter to Senate President Milton E. Potter, the governor said he convened meetings with both the shareholders and the Legislature to facilitate discussion, gather feedback and work toward resolving outstanding issues. He said he met on June 12, 2026 with representatives from the recognized St. Croix Horsemen Association, the St. Croix Horse Racing Commission, the St. Thomas & St. John Horsemen Association and Southland Gaming Virgin Islands.

The Government House release also said the revised agreement reflects two rounds of follow-up discussions with Southland Gaming of the Virgin Islands and the presidents of both the Flamboyant Park Horsemen Association and St. Thomas-St. John Horsemen Associations.

According to the transmittal letter, the June 12 meeting was followed by a June 24, 2026 meeting with the 36th Legislature. The Government House release separately states that Governor Bryan and Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach later met with members of the 36th Legislature on June 25 at Government House on St. Thomas, where the proposal was reviewed, and additional feedback was offered that helped shape the revised version now before the Senate.

“This process was about building greater consensus and giving the Legislature a stronger measure to consider,” Governor Bryan said.

Government House said the governor has contacted Senate President Potter, who agreed that the Legislature would take up the revised measure in mid-July.

All documents not amended will remain part of the package submitted to the Legislature on April 28, 2026, according to the governor’s transmittal letter.

The administration said timely legislative consideration is needed to maintain momentum, begin the rebuilding process on St. Croix, and restore community benefits lost during the racetrack’s prolonged closure.

Governor Bryan also framed the proposal around youth engagement, saying the restoration of horse racing could create structured and constructive activities for young people.

“One of the strongest reasons for moving this agreement forward is the opportunity horse racing creates for our young people,” Governor Bryan said. “Bringing horse racing back gives them something productive to belong to and another path to stay engaged, focused and off the streets. And it is what our people want and have been demanding.”

The proposal is intended to create a more stable foundation for horse racing, increase opportunities for horse owners, trainers, jockeys, vendors and other participants, and preserve a cultural tradition with roots in both districts.

In his transmittal letter, Governor Bryan said prompt legislative action would help create a practical and sustainable framework for restoring horse racing in the territory, particularly on St. Croix, while ensuring accountability, regulatory oversight and long-term operational stability.