

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Calls July 21 Special Session on Revised Southland Horse Racing Agreement

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has called lawmakers into special session on July 21 to consider a revised agreement with Southland Gaming that would advance reconstruction of the Randall “Doc” James Racetrack and support continued horse racing on St. Thomas.

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has called the 36th Legislature into special session on Tuesday, July 21, to consider a revised horse racing agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and Southland Gaming Virgin Islands LLC.

The proposed agreement would advance the long-awaited reconstruction of the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack on St. Croix, support the continued operation of horse racing on St. Thomas and establish a more unified framework for the sport across the territory.

The revised agreement follows meetings involving the Flamboyant Park Horsemen Association, the St. Thomas-St. John Horsemen Association, the Virgin Islands Horse Racing Commission, Southland Gaming Virgin Islands LLC and members of the Legislature.

According to Government House, the discussions allowed stakeholders to raise concerns, make recommendations and help shape the revisions now being sent to lawmakers.

Governor Bryan described the revised agreement as a good-faith effort to address issues raised during the review process while continuing work toward restoring horse racing as a cultural, recreational and economic institution in the Virgin Islands.

"This agreement has been discussed, questioned, reviewed and revised. That is how the process should work," Governor Bryan said. "We listened to the horsemen, we listened to lawmakers and we listened to the concerns raised by the people most directly connected to this sport. The revised agreement now before the Legislature reflects that engagement and gives us a responsible path forward."

The governor said restoring horse racing involves more than rebuilding a racetrack. He linked the effort to preserving a longstanding Virgin Islands tradition and creating opportunities for economic activity, community engagement and positive outlets for young people.

"For generations, horse racing has been part of who we are as Virgin Islanders," Governor Bryan said. "It has brought families together, supported small businesses, created jobs and given many of our young men a place to learn discipline, responsibility and pride. We have an opportunity now to bring that back in a way that is structured, sustainable and fair to the people of the Virgin Islands."

Governor Bryan said the agreement resulted from continued dialogue and that the special session would allow lawmakers to bring the matter to a public vote.

"This issue has been before us for a long time," Governor Bryan said. "The people who care about this sport, the horsemen who have kept it alive and the communities that have waited years for progress deserve a decision. I am calling this Special Session because it is time for the Legislature to consider the revised agreement and determine the path forward."

The governor thanked members of the horse racing community, lawmakers and other stakeholders who participated in the review process.

"This has not always been easy, but meaningful progress rarely is," Governor Bryan said. "What matters is that we stayed at the table, worked through the concerns and kept the focus on what is best for the Territory. I urge the Legislature to give this revised agreement its full and fair consideration."

