

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Horse Racing To Continue Uninterrupted On St. Croix After Commission Order

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In an effort to avoid interrupting horse racing on St. Croix and to keep the island's ailing economy from losing any more jobs, the Casino Control Commission (CCC) on Friday issued an order to three companies involved in the local racing industry to continue their involvement as usual until the Commission issues a final order.

Treasure Bay VI, Corp., the Flamboyant Horsemen Association Inc., and TRAXCO Inc. are to move forward with normal business and to honor all the conditions of their existing agreements for a period not exceeding 60 days, the CCC said in a statement.

During that time, the Commission's independent hearing officer will conduct a formal hearing on the Flamboyant Horsemen Racing Association's "request for order to show cause why Treasure Bay VI, Corp. should not be ordered to cease and desist its Racino activities at the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack."

The extension will also give the CCC's independent hearing officer enough time to report findings, give recommendations, and issue a final order, according to the CCC statement.

"The Commission remains committed to affording all parties an expedited hearing process, and will exercise every legal means to minimize any potential damage to the gaming industry, especially during these critical economic times," the CCC statement reads.

It continues, "While the Commission cannot guarantee a positive end for the parties involved, we expect the parties to remain respectful of the legal process until the IHO issues her recommendations to the Commission, and the Commission issues a final order in a meeting of the Commission to be scheduled within the next 30 to 60 days."

Apart from following Virgin Islands law, the CCC said it issued Friday's order to preserve jobs on St. Croix, as its economy is already struggling and any job loss would further hurt the island.

In light of the current situation and other reasons, the Commission advised the involved parties to refer all gaming-related issues to the Commission, since, according to local law, it is the only established regulatory body created for the purpose of regulating casino gaming in the territory.

"We are duty-bound, pursuant to 32 V.I.C. §415, to 'hear and decide promptly and in reasonable order' all license, registration, certificate, and permit applications and causes affecting the granting, suspension, revocation, or renewal thereof," the CCC statement said. "Any activity that violates the V.I. Casino and Resort Control Act of 1995 will be referred to the Department of Justice, Division of Gaming Enforcement for review and further action."

Horse racing is especially important on St. Croix, critically so during the annual Agriculture Fair events, when large crowds make their way to the Randall "Doc" James Racetrack to witness and enjoy the competitions.