

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Seaborne Airlines Responds To Senator Gittens

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ST. CROIX -- Following a scathing message from Senator Kenneth Gittens calling on Seaborne Airlines to lower its rates that allegedly skyrocket to \$300 at times, the airline's President and Chief Executive Officer, Gary D. Foss, responded to the senator by highlighting Seaborne Airlines' dedication and contributions to the territory, challenging his claim of Seaborne flights costing \$300, spotlighting special fares as low as \$39, and revealing expansion plans for its US Virgin Islands operation.

Seaborne Airlines, which employs 117 residents, remains one of the largest employers in the territory, Foss said. The executive also revealed that Gittens, who has traveled 42 times through the airline this year alone, has paid, on average, \$100 which includes local and federal taxes.

Foss also revealed that the sea and land operations have varying price points, with tickets for the sea operation costing \$79, \$99 and \$129 one way, including taxes and fees, while the land operation between the islands is \$86 one way. The reason for the cheaper rate through the land operation is because the aircraft are larger and accommodate more passengers, Foss made known.

"Every week we offer many special promotions for those 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' or leisure travelers such as the current promotion of \$49 each way that is available on select seaplane and airport flights. We often run email and internet specials as low as \$39. This is a far cry from the \$300 fares you speak of in your letter and your press release," Foss said.

And Seaborne, Foss added, is no longer a territorial player; but has become a company that encompasses the Caribbean, opening its 17 Caribbean destination, Antigua, next week.

But "we have strong historical ties to the United States Virgin Islands and remain one of the USVI's largest employers with 117 employees," Foss went on.

The CEO said Seaborne continues to invest "heavily" in its product, a move that serves not only to boost the company's bottom line, but the territory's economy, through inter-island commerce, as well.

"Aside from upgrading our airport product to larger planes with flight attendants, further differentiating our product from the smaller planes of our competitors, we have also upgraded our Seaplane fleet, bringing on two new \$5.6M aTwin Otter aircraft. We have added new tent shelters, new benches, new docks, a new restaurant offering and are currently investing in a Seaplane beautification project," Foss revealed.

He added: "In short, Seaborne represents bigger planes, higher frequency, fare flexibility and American Airlines and JetBlue branding at attractive price points for a superior product between the islands."

In closing, the chief executive said he's hoping to meet with Gittens upon his return to the territory at the end of August. The meeting, he said, will be arranged through Seaborne Airlines' representative, [Celestino White](#).