

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Port Authority Purchases New Passenger Lift For Cyril E. King Airport

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ST. THOMAS -- Virgin Islands Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe announced on Wednesday that VIPA has purchased a new passenger lift to help physically challenged passengers, senior citizens and other passengers with special needs to board or deplane at the Cyril E. King Airport (CEKA).

According to the release, the new lift cost \$100,000 and was made available for use by the airlines at CEKA this week. The airport now has three passenger lifts. These lifts are necessary as the airport's terminal does not have jet bridges and passengers would previously board or deplane via mobile staircases.

The lifts are the property of the Port Authority but are used by the airlines. Dowe met with the airlines at CEKA last week to discuss proper use and maintenance of the machinery, the release further stated. At the meeting, the airline ground handlers alerted the executive director that they have seen a noted increase in the amount of passengers requiring the use of the lifts.

"In the past, we received three to five requests for a passenger lift per day," Dowe said. "Today, the airlines have reported to us that they may have as many as seven passengers that need the lift for each airline every day."

He added: "This lift is a necessity to ensure that all travelers receive the best possible departure and arrival experience."

Dowe went on to say that VIPA plans to purchase an additional lift in its next budget cycle to adequately meet the increased demand for a passenger lift during peak hours at CEKA.

The Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix also has two passenger lifts, which has proven to be adequate based on the requests for the lifts received at HERA, Dowe said.