

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Signs Into Law Bill Seeking To Promote St. Croix To Tourists Visiting St. Thomas

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp has signed into law a [bill](#) sponsored by Senator Nereida "Nelly" Rivera-O'Reilly that calls for the promotion of St. Croix to tourists visiting this island.

The effort will be a joint venture between the Department of Tourism and the Economic Development Authority, to form "a strategic plan and implement the requirements no later than August 31, 2015," according to the bill's language.

The governor, however, did not agree with the timeline the bill demanded, stating in a note accompanying the approval that, "while it is our intent to comply with the statute and

implement the provisions of this measure, expecting us to do so by August 31, 2015, would be unrealistic."

The measure would require postings of St. Croix's destinations at the following locations:

- At the Cyril E. King Airport baggage claim area
- All hotels and bed and breakfasts located in St. Thomas and St. John
- All docks where cruise ship and ferry passengers embark and disembark
- All marinas and retail centers known as tourist attractions
- Public beaches and government-operated public transportation vehicles and bus stations

The measure also states that all promotional activities must be carried out through the use of appropriate advertisements such as posters, billboards, videos and audio presentations clearly depicting the island of St. Croix as an option to tourists who desire to experience the entire Virgin Islands.

Funding for the aforementioned activities will be made available through the Tourism Revolving Fund.

The governor also signed into law bill No. 31-0082 -- relating to the annual audits of the books and records of managers or boards of Apartments and Condominiums. The measure, sponsored by Sen. Rivera-O'Reilly, allows condominiums with 10 or less units to make available financial records upon request by condo owners, and also gives board members the authority to vote on the need for an audit.

The changes to the current law dating back to the 1960s that required all condominiums to perform annual audits was much-needed, testifiers said, because the requirement was burdensome, costly and unwarranted.

Bill No. 31-0091, which requires that the Department of Agriculture conduct a feasibility study of the production, marketability and medical value of the Moringa tree and commercial value of the production of Bamboo and Aloe Vera in the territory, also won Mapp's approval. However, the governor said while the study is a commendable idea, the bill did not contain an appropriation to cover its cost.

"I urge the Legislature to appropriate funds to meet its mandate," Mapp said.