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USVI Will Allow Bars and Restaurants to Reopen to Dine-In Customers Beginning Next Week; Some Restrictions Apply

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Robert Moore **May 21, 2020**

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AMA at Cane Bay Restaurant By. **AMA at Cane Bay**

U.S. Virgin Islands bars and restaurants have permission to reopen to dine-in patrons beginning next Tuesday, May 26th, with certain restrictions, Governor Albert Bryan announced Thursday. The decision further sets the stage for a full reopening of the territory to tourists in June.

“Tuesday (May 26th) will allow a soft opening of restaurants and bars so they can understand what their service is going to look like, have an opportunity to call employees and properly space their tables, chairs, and to make sure they have the proper equipment to sanitize and keep the people visiting those restaurants and bars safe,” Mr. Bryan said during the regular Government

House COVID-19 update.

The restrictions placed on establishments will include:

- Employees are required to wear facial coverings at all times. Governor Bryan told the Consortium while patrons are not required to wear the masks at the restaurants and bars, "it is strongly recommended."
- Establishments must provide "sanitization stations" for customers and employees.
- Restaurants and bars can only operate at half of Fire Marshal-approved seating capacity, or host a maximum of 50 customers. "That is 50 percent of what the Fire Marshal said you can put in there or 50 customers — whichever one is less," Mr. Bryan said.
- Tables must be placed at least six feet apart.
- Establishments cannot cater to parties larger than six people. Larger groups can be split up among multiple tables that are properly spaced apart.
- Bar stools must be "spaced out as much as possible. ... We know that's going to be difficult, but we are encouraging you to do that."

Mr. Bryan said more detailed guidance will be made public prior to Tuesday. He said the instructions to the food and beverage industry will be based on guidance by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Restaurant Association.

The territory opens to leisure travel after June 1, when hotel reservations systems can be reactivated. In the meantime, Mr. Bryan urged the newly reopening businesses to follow the rules. "We don't really enjoy shutting businesses down, but we will shut you down if we have to," he said.