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Seaborne/Silver Airlines Says it Plans on Increasing USVI, PR Flights; Says Route Suspension List is Temporary Option for Flexibility

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Seaborne and Silver planes By. CRUSELDA ROBERTS FOR VI CONSORTIUM

Seaborne Airlines and Silver Airways told the Consortium Sunday that a U.S. Department of Transportation clearance to suspend certain routes, in Seaborne's and Silver's case the USVI, Puerto Rico and Vieques, is a temporary, optional measure due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The request was made to the [U.S. Dept. of Transportation] to grant temporary flexibility in case of no demand due to the Covid-19 crisis," Seaborne/Silver said in a statement. "At this time, Silver does not expect to use this relief."

Seaborne/Silver is [among the three airlines that sought authorization](#) from the U.S. D.O.T. to reduce their services in the U.S. Virgin Islands, with United including a St. Thomas stop to its list while Spirit Airlines listed several.

Seaborne/Silver, however, intends on increasing their service in the USVI. "Seaborne is increasing to one additional weekday flight on the seaplane starting in June. Silver is evaluating expanding its San Juan Airport flights," the carrier said.

The airline stressed that it remains committed to the USVI, and will continue supporting flights in the territory.

U.S. carriers received \$25 billion from the \$2.2 trillion Cares Act, funds that were supposed to be used to cover payroll costs, while stipulating that airlines not involuntarily furlough workers or cut pay rates through the end of September.

Yet with few flights and less work, airlines started arguing that the stipulation was impractical, and the U.S. Department of Transportation [conceded](#), announcing earlier this month that it would allow domestic carriers to reduce or even drop certain airports. See full list [here](#).