

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Another Cruise Ship Cancels Port Of Call To St. Croix; Dept. Of Tourism Issues Statement

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ST. CROIX -- Just days following a Virgin Islands Port Authority press release revealing that Holland American Cruise Lines had [cancelled its call, set for Jan. 10, to this island](#), the Department of Tourism revealed in a press release issued late Wednesday, that yet another cruise line, prepared to visit the island on March 13, had cancelled its visit as well. Above, Celebrity Constellation, docked at the Ann E Abramson Pier in Frederiksted.

"There have been cancellations of port calls to St. Croix - on Sunday, January 10 and another on Sunday, March 13," reads the release. "We acknowledge that all cruise calls, particularly to St. Croix, are of critical importance, and establishing the reasons for the

calls not being confirmed is important. We want to make it clear that this does not signal a specific challenge or concern with St. Croix as a cruise destination," it added.

DOT's release did not reveal the name of the ship that cancelled its March 13 call here, but comments made by Governor Kenneth Mapp during a Tuesday press conference -- held at Government House in St. Thomas to update the territory on government agencies and departments that were to receive pay raises, comments he made in regards to Senator Janette Millin Young's accusation, and the status of the ArcLight/GVI operating agreement -- brought to the fore complications for St. Croix's already struggling tourism offering.

The remarks, which alluded to some disturbing rambles with a particular cruise line, came unexpectedly, and the governor, while clearly acknowledging that something had gone wrong, left many questions unanswered.

"There are a couple of things that we have to look at. We will acknowledge that there seems to be some rapid changes taking place on the schedule of cruise visits to the island of St. Croix. We see a number of ships are being pulled off of the schedule," the governor said. "We had an issue with one of our representatives -- who I will leave unnamed at the moment -- at a meeting in Florida that may have caused some serious consternation with one of the cruise lines, and I want to be sure that nothing that occurred in that meeting is a result of what we're seeing -- this rapid change in cruise destinations to the island of St. Croix."

He added: "And this goes back to the point that we have to broaden and diverse our economy, and while we are partners with the cruise industry and wish to continue to do so, when we have such a strong reliance on one segment, then these are the kinds of actions that can happen that may not be in our favor."

According to the DOT release, Mr. Mapp met members of the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association on Wednesday in Miami to discuss the matter, as well as other pertinent issues. The governor also indicated that he would schedule meetings with the VIPA and the West Indian Company boards upon his return, the release added.

And Tourism said that it remains of paramount importance that the islands' leadership continues to focus on the following initiatives: