

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Summons VI Port Authority Board To Government House For Urgent Meeting Following Florida Trip

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Disney Fantasy docked at Havensight in St. Thomas

ST. THOMAS -- Following a meeting in Florida with the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association last Wednesday to discuss the reason for the apparent continued cancellations of cruise ship calls to St. Croix, Governor Kenneth Mapp has requested an urgent meeting with Virgin Islands Port Authority board members, according to a press release Government House issued on Monday.

The meeting, the release made known, was to be held immediately following the Martin Luther King Day holiday weekend.

“I want to share with board members my discussions with FCCA executives so that we may determine steps going forward,” Governor Mapp said.

On Wednesday, Jan. 13, the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism issued a statement revealing that yet another cruise line, prepared to visit St. Croix on March, 13, had cancelled its visit.

“There have been cancellations of port calls to St. Croix – on Sunday, January 10 and another on Sunday, March 13,” read 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 to St. Croix, but comments made by Mr. Mapp [during a Tuesday, January 12 press conference](#), 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.”

The governor is expected to update the territory on his discussions with officials from the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association, as well as VIPA board members following the urgent gathering.

Feature Image: Disney Fantasy docked at Havensight in St. Thomas

Image Credit: VIC.