

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dear Governor, Consider Small Hotels Spread Across St. Croix

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Dear Governor, I know you love St. Croix. I have had many conversations with you about our island and you always express great enthusiasm for the progress you see us having with the government and the private sector working together. I could not agree more. You have said in effect, that leadership must get ahead of what has been thought to be the right direction by past and old thinking. I have seen in the last year your willingness to shake things up. This does not always get you a statue in the park erected by those who would prefer to keep doing the same old thing. So be it!

One of the biggest challenges for us on beautiful St. Croix, is: what we are to the outside world. St. Thomas is known as the big hotel, cruise ship island, Tortola as the sail boat

charter island, St. Barts as the topless island, St. John as the national park place, but we have no simple handle.

Here is our challenge and chance! With your leadership and the help of community members we can give the outside world a true picture of our island. You have correctly stated that to compete in the important tourism industry, we, on St. Croix, must have 'branded' hotels. You have stated correctly that many, if not most vacation travelers use the 'millage' or 'points' they accumulate during the year on other business trips to pay for the family vacation. These vacations are spent at hotels that accept these 'credits'. These hotels are the 'branded' hotels, such as Hilton, Marriot, and other 'name' hotels.

We on St. Croix are unique in the Caribbean, in that we are spread out. We are the only island with two distinct towns, with a variety of landscapes. We have a semi-arid cactus dry east end with a tropical rain forest on the west end. This variety of landscape and the variety of people east and west and in-between, give us an opportunity and desire to keep it small and varied.

I know you have said that a big resort complex is a goal of yours, and some old studies have argued for that, but those days are gone. In all due respect, I urge you to consider a series of smaller branded hotels spread around the Island. This way we do not put all our eggs in one basket.

We have just spent the last three years suffering from all the eggs (Hovensa) in one basket.

I know you have just appointed a committee to study this issue and I hope you have not limited them to any one big project. When the earlier studies were conducted, there was no such thing as 'Airbnb' or house rentals on the internet, and on islands not as interesting as St. Croix, people might want to be 'secluded' in one resort. But we are an interesting island from one end to the other.

I know you are a revolutionary in your thinking, let us spread the wealth around to several locations on the Island. Sharing the wealth is a very important thing today and you can do it. Constructing one giant resort will require outside contractors while smaller hotel construction will allow our existing construction people to get to work.

Please give some thought to this and ask your new committee to consider it as well, thank you.

Submitted by:

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