

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Territory To Come Into Compliance With Real ID Act By End Of 2016, B.M.V. Director Says

VIC News / **Published On April 22, 2016 10:46 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **April 22, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- During a Committee on Government Services, Consumer and Veterans Affairs hearing held on Thursday, Bureau of Motor Vehicle (B.M.V.) Director Lawrence Olive, said the territory would come into compliance with the Federal Real ID Act by the end of this year.

"We should have [the Real ID] completed before the end of this year," Mr. Olive said at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall. "The new vendor is already in place; we're just waiting on the signature and contracts so we could get it going to the A.G.'s office for their review. Once that is done, the vendor is ready to start right now."

The Department of Homeland Security (D.H.S.) on Friday, January 8, announced that five states, along with the U.S. Virgin Islands, would have two more years to come into compliance with the Act.

“Today I announce the schedule for the final phase of implementation of the REAL ID Act. Bottom line up front: Effective January 22, 2018, air travelers with a driver’s license or identification card issued by a state that does not meet the requirements of the REAL ID Act (unless that state has been granted an extension to comply with the Act) must present an alternative form of identification acceptable to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in order to board a commercial domestic flight. Over the next two years, those states that are not REAL ID compliant are strongly encouraged to meet the requirements of the law for the benefit of their residents,” said D.H.S. Secretary Jeh Johnson in a January [press release](#).

The announcement was welcomed news to residents who had not yet applied for their passports, as traveling with one’s driver’s license has been the norm for many. It also served as reassurance to Governor Kenneth Mapp, who requested an extension back in October of 2015, after B.M.V. fumbled its opportunity to implement the new requirements, even after spending over \$2 million on the project. According to Mr. Olive, there were problems with software developed by a company named BIZVI that needed to be rectified before implementation.

“The overall goal of the REAL ID Act passed by Congress is to prevent the fraudulent issuance and use of driver’s licenses and identification cards, thereby ensuring the safety and security of the American public. Given today’s threat environment, this requirement is as relevant now as it was when the 9/11 Commission recommended it,” Mr. Johnson said.

Following the news, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett issued a release applauding the federal government’s decision to extend.

“We are pleased that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has granted additional time to states and territories to become compliant with the REAL ID Act. Our office has had several meetings and has been in contact with D.H.S. to ensure the territory received additional time to come in compliance,” she said. “This extension will allow Virgin Islanders, who use their locally issued driver’s license as their primary form of identification, the ability to continue using that form of identification to travel and access federal facilities in the country.”