

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Study For Major Four-Star Hotel On St. Croix Completed; Mapp Seeks \$1 Million From Legislature For Next Phase

Business / **Published On May 04, 2016 11:12 AM /**

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp on Tuesday said the Government of the Virgin Islands was ready to move forward with the next phase of a four-star hotel project on St. Croix, following a \$50,000 (paid through the Public Finance Authority) destination study to locate an area here to best fit the upcoming resort.

Following the [announcement in January](#), Mr. Mapp unveiled a transaction team that would lead the effort, which included the following persons: Dept. of Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty, Attorney Joel Holt, Government House Chief

Counsel Emile Henderson, Finance Commissioner Valdemier Collens, Chief Economist Dr. Simon Jones-Hendrickson and St. Croix hoteliers Mr. Jack Pickle and Ms. Elizabeth Armstrong.

The governor said he recently contacted Senate President Neville James, inquiring on legislation that he sent to the Senate to reprogram to the resort project \$1 million that were supposed to be expended for litigation.

"Those resources are needed so that the transaction team can begin its work to structure a project, develop a brand partner, develop initial schematics and locations for the island of St. Croix, and to go out to the market to bid for a brand partner -- meaning a Hyatt, a Hilton, a Starwood, a Marriott -- whoever the transaction team determines would be the best player for this project, and to begin the process to determine the source of the financing, that then allows me to submit to the Legislature for their consideration a completed package that can begin the construction and development," Mr. Mapp said.

The governor reiterated his stance that such hotel development is needed here, as St. Croix remains far behind in room accommodation. "The island of St. Croix is net minus approximately 1,800 rooms to take any real part in the tourism industry," he said.

The governor first announced the hotel at his State of the Territory address (S.O.T.A.) in January, and said his administration would unveil, before the end of 2016, a 250-room 4-star hotel development on the big island. However he did not go into detail in regards to where on St. Croix it would be built, or the company backing the project's development.

"In 2003, the Public Finance Authority commissioned a destination study by HVS International pertaining to the future development of hotels and meeting facilities for the island of St. Croix. I have asked the PFA to have the destination study updated," the governor said in January. "It is my administration's objective to send to this body before year's end a development project for the construction and operation of a branded hotel facility of at least 4-stars and not less than 250 rooms for the island of St. Croix."