

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Gathers Delegation Of Sixteen To Travel China On Trade Mission

Business / **Published On May 27, 2016 10:33 AM /**

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ST. CROIX -- [Earlier this month](#), Governor Kenneth Mapp announced that he would be traveling to China on May 31, invited on a trade mission with officials of China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec). On Thursday, The Consortium learned that 16 Virgin Islands officials -- six from the private sector and ten from the Virgin Islands government -- make up the delegation traveling on Tuesday.

That's according to the administration's new communications director, Cherie Munchez, who revealed the information after a Consortium inquiry. Governor Kenneth Mapp is included in the delegation of sixteen.

"Those private sector representatives will be paying for themselves, and the individual G.V.I. [Government of the Virgin Islands] departments and agencies will be paying for their own representatives," Ms. Munchez said. Names were not revealed, but Ms. Munchez said more information would be forthcoming before the delegation leaves for China.

During the announcement, Mr. Mapp said he would take with him on the trip a delegation that includes Dept. of Tourism officials, tax and trade officials, members of his office, the two presidents of both the St. Croix and St. Thomas Chamber of Commerce, along with any senator who'd like to attend.

"This mission is to work along with Sinopec who has very serious interest in making additional significant investments on the island of St. Croix. The plan here is to visit a number of their additional storage terminals and refining facilities, to discuss additional and limited refining at the St. Croix site; to discuss areas where we plan to breakdown the current refinery and begin in that area to stage the transshipment of goods coming from China to the West and goods from the West to China," Mr. Mapp said.

He continued: "That trade mission will include meetings with Air China to discuss weekly or by-weekly flights to the island of St. Croix, to bring Chinese tourists similar to what we're doing with the [Danish tourists on the Norwegian Airlines](#). The plan is also to discuss — and hopefully to save the Virgin Islands Government some money — the possibility of a hotel project on the big island as well."

The territory's leader said the trip will take the delegation to Beijing, Ningbo and Shanghai, and will be led by Sinopec officials.

"The plan is to create more jobs, to pursue more investments on the big island, to expand tourism and flights to the territory, and to bring another diverse group of individuals who have the financial wherewithal to make the investments in the territory," the governor concluded.

The trade trip is a big deal because Sinopec is one of the most powerful companies in the world. Its financial reach surpasses that of many governments, and it has connections that intertwines well past the oil industry. The firm has 358,571 employees based on 2015 numbers. Its total assets stand at a value of 1.451 trillion, and the firm has branches all over the world, including [Canada](#) and the [U.S.](#)