

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Carnival Cruise Line President Says Her Comments Were 'Grossly Mischaracterized' By Sen. Hansen; Sees St. Croix As Growth Area For Industry

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Ernice Gilbert **March 31, 2017**



The Carnival Glory cruises off the coast of Florida. (Photo by Andy Newman/Carnival Cruise Lines)

ST. CROIX -- The president of Carnival Cruise Line, Christine Duffy, in a response to comments made by Senator Alicia Hansen during [a Senate hearing on Tuesday](#), said not only does she know St. Croix exists, Carnival Cruise Line sees the island as a market with strong potential for growth.

Ms. Duffy's response came following pointed remarks by Mrs. Hansen, who said that cruise officials told her at this year's Seatrade Global that the U.S. Virgin Islands had lost ground in the cruise business because the guardians of the territory's tourism product had become complacent. The senator also quoted Ms. Duffy as stating that she had never even heard of St. Croix.

However, in a statement issued to The Consortium on Thursday, Ms. Duffy -- speaking through Corporate Communications Manager for Carnival Cruise Line Christine de la Huerta -- said the senator had flagrantly mischaracterized the conversation.

"This is not only factually incorrect but a gross mischaracterization of the conversation," wrote Ms. de la Huerta on behalf of Ms. Duffy. "What Ms. Duffy indicates she said is that while we do not have many cruise ship calls in St. Croix and she has not personally traveled there, she understands it is a beautiful island. She and another Carnival employee who were present during the conversation confirm that this is, in fact, what she stated."

"As an additional point of fact, I would add that Carnival views St. Croix as having strong potential for growth from a cruise business perspective," Ms. de la Huerta added.

At the Tuesday Senate hearing, held in the Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture, Mrs. Hansen said that after she was told by Ms. Duffy that she had never heard of St. Croix, she asked again for clarification.

"I had to ask her again, 'Maybe you have not come to St. Croix, but you know about St. Croix?' She said no," Mr. Hansen said. "That's the president; I have a serious problem with that."

On Thursday, the senator stuck by her comments in a conversation with The Consortium. Asked multiple times whether she was told by Ms. Duffy that she had never traveled to St. Croix and did not know it existed, Mrs. Hansen said, "Yes. That's my position." She said she also told Ms. Duffy to consider sending ships to St. Croix, as the island is not far away from St. Thomas.

Feature Image: The Carnival Glory cruises off the coast of Florida. (Credit: Andy Newman/Carnival Cruise Lines)