

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas To Welcome Royal Caribbean's Adventure Of The Seas On November 10

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ST. THOMAS -- The Government of the Virgin Islands is welcoming the return of Royal Caribbean's Adventure of the Seas to the territory on Friday, Nov. 10, the Department of Tourism (D.O.T.) announced Monday.

Governor Kenneth Mapp and D.O.T. Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty, reported today that the cruise company will be the first to return to St. Thomas following back-to-back Category 5 hurricanes that impacted the territory last month.

The news follows last week's visit by Royal Caribbean executives to meet with the territory's public and private sector stakeholders and see firsthand the island's port

facilities, infrastructure, shopping areas and attractions.

"As we move forward from September's historic storms, we are laser-focused on improving and enhancing the overall tourism product, and creating an environment that stimulates economic growth and employment for our residents," Mr. Mapp said as he thanked the executive team at Royal Caribbean for its confidence in the government and people of the territory.

The line, which operated two mercy missions to the territory to assist with the evacuation of affected visitors and residents and to bring much needed humanitarian supplies, has been providing significant resources to help with the restoration of world-famous Magens Bay -- one of St. Thomas's most popular beaches. The cleanup effort is being made possible with the support of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the Department of Public Works, the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, the Virgin Islands National Guard and several private sector organizations.

"We are very excited to get back home to our friends in St. Thomas. The Caribbean is our family, having cruised there for nearly 50 years, and the long-standing relationships created in all this time are unwavering," said Michael Bayley, president and CEO of Royal Caribbean International. "We are committed to doing everything we can to help, and proud to support the restoration of the iconic Magens Bay."

"Welcoming cruise visitors back to the U.S. Virgin Islands is key to our economic recovery," Mrs. Nicholson-Doty underscored, disclosing that cruise guests represent a significant share of overall visitors, supporting jobs both within and outside the tourism sector. The commissioner said preparations for Royal Caribbean's arrival were ongoing and additional meetings with the business community were being planned.

St. Croix will also see a surge of cruise ships this season, according to Mr. Mapp. He said cruise line officials have been reaching out to the territory to reopen the ports, as many of the Leeward islands -- among them St. Martin and the British Virgin Islands -- were battered by the storms and have yet to reopen, limiting the amount of destinations available to the cruise lines.

Even so, Mr. Mapp said his administration would be cautious as it welcomes cruise ship visitors, noting that the USVI itself was slammed by two Category 5 storms, and is still in recovery mode -- with most of the islands currently without power. The governor said his administration has so far accepted 90 cruise ship calls out of 164 requests for St. Croix.