

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Other Norwegian Cruise Ships Scheduled For St. Croix May Be Canceled, Mapp Says

Business / **Published On November 11, 2017 12:14 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp, addressing cruise ship Norwegian Dawn's cancellation of its scheduled berthing today at the Frederiksted Pier, said at his Friday press briefing that "a number" of other Norwegian Cruise Line ships -- [6 ships out of the 12 in total set to berth at the pier for the remainder of 2017](#) -- would cancel their stops to the port.

Mr. Mapp said Robin Lindsay, executive vice president of vessel operations at Norwegian Cruise Line, extended apologies to the people of the territory for the late notice of the cancellation. The governor said Mr. Lindsay told him that the decision was made by the on-board revenue side of the company, which he said claimed the cancellation was

related to issues with on-ground excursions.

According to Mr. Mapp, St. Croix had been preparing for the ship's arrival, and that Frederiksted had been energized -- the streets and the Port's pier, he said, were cleaned, and that vendors had gone to "extraordinary lengths" to be ready to welcome and serve cruise ship passengers.

But contrary to the governor's assessment of the town, Senator Nereida Rivera-O'Reilly, [who shared the cancellation news on her Facebook page](#), suggested that Frederiksted was far from ready. "It appears that representatives from Disney and Norwegian cruise lines were in the region last week and surveyed the islands. This precipitated their decision. Why you ask? If you haven't toured Frederiksted recently, I encourage you to. Obviously the decision to divert the ship was a result of what they saw which was very little progress. The Department of Tourism and the Virgin Islands Port Authority have a lot to explain," Mrs. Rivera-O'Reilly said.

The cancellation of the St. Croix berthing is a worrying sign for future ships scheduled to dock in Frederiksted. The balance of berthing between the islands is already [heavily weighted in St. Thomas's favor](#), with 60 cruise ships scheduled to dock in St. Thomas in December, while only 8 are scheduled for St. Croix in the same month. And the Norwegian Dawn's cancellation brings scheduled cruise ship visits to St. Croix in November down to four, and St. Thomas to 26.

During a release earlier this week, Dept. of Tourism Commissioner, Beverly Nicholson-Doty, hailed the then-scheduled berthing of the Norwegian Dawn as an opportunity for cruise passengers to experience Crucian hospitality.

"St. Croix looks forward to welcoming the passengers and crew of the Norwegian Dawn this weekend, and sharing with them our warm, resilient Crucian spirit," Mrs. Nicholson-Doty said. "We thank the countless Virgin Islanders and relief workers who have been working to restore power, clear roadways, prepare beaches and many of our key attractions so that visitors can experience our special Virgin Islands brand of Caribbean hospitality."

The commissioner had explained that taxis, tour operators and government agencies were working together to establish recommended routes for tours.

"Cruise ship passengers contribute important economic activity to the U.S. Virgin Islands," she said. "The combination of cruise traffic, the recovery and construction economy, and the current reopening of hotels to leisure guests on St. Croix are key components of our recovery."

Mr. Mapp, however, said residents should not worry too much about the situation, as his administration would work to assure that the matter is rectified. "We are going to get to the bottom of it and will try to turn that decision completely around," he said.