

The Virgin Islands Consortium

American Airlines Cancels 4 St. Croix Flights In Wake Of 737 Max 8 Grounding; Normal Service To Resume Friday

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ST. CROIX -- At least four American Airlines flights either to or from St. Croix were canceled late Wednesday following the grounding of the 737 Max 8 airplanes in the United States.

Government House provided the information following a Department of Tourism release on Wednesday evening. The latest notification from the local government arrived to The Consortium's inboxes about 11:30 p.m. Wednesday. Below, the cancellations:

- Wednesday, March 13: AA 2317 inbound to STX from MIA is cancelled
- Thursday, March 14: AA 2227 outbound from STX to MIA is cancelled
- Thursday, March 14: AA 1293 inbound to STX from MIA will resume normal operations with a different 737
- Thursday, March 14: AA 2317 inbound to STX from MIA will resume normal operations with a different 737

Regular American Airlines flights to St. Croix are expected to resume Friday, the airline has advised. The list did not include any St. Thomas flights.

President Donald Trump, following mounting international pressure to ground Boeing's 737 Max 8 airplane in light of a crash on Sunday in Ethiopia, which came after an accident of the same model airplane in Indonesia in October, announced the grounding of the plane in the United States Wednesday afternoon.

The move came after the rest of the world had banned the airplane from flying based on new information gleaned from the Ethiopian Airlines crash via satellite-tracking data, which confirmed similarities between the Sunday crash and last year's. The incidents resulted in the combined deaths of 346 people from all parts of the world, including the Caribbean. The Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.), following Mr. Trump's order, said it too had gathered new information from satellite data suggesting similarities between the accidents.

"The safety of the American people, of all people, is our paramount concern," Mr. Trump told reporters at the White House.

Governor Albert Bryan said in a Department of Tourism release issued Wednesday evening that he supported the decision. "Erring on the side of caution and ensuring the safety of Virgin Islands residents and travelers to the territory is our utmost priority," Mr. Bryan. "This Administration supports the decision to temporarily ground Boeing's 737 MAX. While this action may result in changes to normal flight operations and affect airlift, I have full confidence in our travel partner American Airlines to mobilize its assets and resume normal operations in a short period of time."

The grounding will remain in effect pending further investigation, including the examination of the flight-data and cockpit-voice recorders of an Ethiopian Airlines jet that crashed last weekend, the F.A.A. said.