

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senator Jackson Says He Traveled To Seatrade To Further Develop His Festival Park Legislation

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Senator Myron Jackson on Sunday issued a release that sought to explain why he traveled to Miami, Florida to attend Seatrade, the Global Cruise Conference. The release comes as senators have been criticized by Virgin Islanders who see 6 lawmakers traveling to the event as excessive and abuse of taxpayer funds, when officials from the Department of Tourism, the West Indian Company (WICO), the Virgin Islands Port Authority, and the territory's governor traditionally travel to the weeklong event.

In his release, Mr. Jackson said he attended this year to further develop his legislation to create a festival park in the downtown Charlotte Amalie area to enhance the Virgin Islands as a cultural heritage tourism destination. The senator said he's pushing the

proposed measure to designate new land mass created by dredging as a result of the WICO dock expansion project as a park that can serve multiple needs. The idea initially

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Image of potential Long

Bay Landing Project completion

Governor Albert Bryan told The Consortium last week that he would seek partners in an effort to restart the Long Bay Landing Project while in Miami at the conference. "We want to make sure that the cruise industry knows that that project is alive," he said. "We're looking for partners to build it."

Mr. Jackson said his measure calls for wide collaboration across several government agencies to include the Departments of Planning and Natural Resources; Public Works; Sports, Parks and Recreation; and Tourism, as well as the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts and the Virgin Islands Cultural Heritage Institute.

"The idea is to ensure the entertainment and special events park can serve as a central location for cultural activities such as culinary events, music festivals, Carnival, and other special local and tourist events," Mr. Jackson said. "The goal is to gain a competitive edge with competing islands."

The senator's vision includes the construction of permanent booths for ticketing, food, and vendors, as well as stages, parking, covered and open-air seating, administrative offices, security, telecast and audio-visual services, and bathroom accommodations.

"I have been advocating for the Long Bay Landing expansion as the best proposal for the economic development of our cruise industry," he said. "The previous decision, during the last administration, to relocate the project to Crown Bay was a poor planning decision that stymied our financial growth and advancement of our tourism industry. Finally, we are back on track."

Seatrade is the world's largest gathering of who's who in the cruise industry, and brings together cruise line executives, media, speakers, port representatives, ship builders and vendors to discuss most aspects of cruising at the multi-day conference.

