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Bryan Sends Bill to Senate Giving Southland Gaming Clear to Redevelop St. Thomas Race Track; St. Croix Facility to See 'Improvements'

Government / **Published On March 03, 2022 06:29 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 03, 2022**

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Government House said Wednesday that Governor Albert Bryan has submitted a proposed bill and related agreements to the 34th Legislature to address the recent settlement of the lawsuit between the Government of the Virgin Islands, Southland Gaming and VIGL that the administration said was blocking the redevelopment of the Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack on St. Thomas.

Under the agreement, Southland will construct a facility in the grandstand and provide 50 VLTs, and VIGL will operate the VLT facility and be the promoter of the races at the track, the administration said. However, as it relates to St. Croix, the release speaks to "renovations" to the race track as compared to the complete rebuild [envisioned under the original agreement with](#)

[VIGL](#), approved by former Governor Kenneth Mapp in 2016, when VIGL had a territory-wide contract with the government to rebuild both the St. Croix and St. Thomas facilities. Plans stalled [following lawsuits](#) between Southland Gaming, VIGL and the local government

"VIGL and the GVI already have amended the Franchise Agreement to separate obligations related to the St. Thomas Racetrack and the St. Croix Racetrack in order to begin renovations at the St. Croix racetrack. Once the Southland agreements are approved by the Legislature, VIGL and GVI will further amend the Franchise Agreement to remove the development of the St Thomas Racetrack as needed," stated Government House, citing Mr. Bryan's transmittal letter.

It was not clear how the measure would be received in the Senate.

Southland also agreed to commit up to \$100,000 each race day, up to \$600,000 annually, toward purses at the racetrack for the duration of its contract with the GVI and is extended for 13 years to match the duration of VIGL's agreement.

Also under the settlement, the GVI agreed to allow VLTs instead of slot machines at the St. Thomas Racetrack facility under Lottery regulation; to remove portions of the Racino Act that would allow slot machines at the St. Thomas Racetrack; to correct Casino Revenue Fund allocation (32 VIC 517(c)) to add up to 100 percent (not 101 percent), and to provide for Racetrack gaming tax to go toward St. Croix purposes only.

"In support of the Settlement Agreement, the Parties have agreed to amend the Video Lottery Agreement and to enter into a Development Agreement in such a way that allows Southland to complete the development of the Racetrack and VIGL to manage the racetrack after construction," Governor Bryan wrote in his transmittal letter to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory, according to Government House.

"The GVI and VIGL have already agreed to remove the development of the Clinton E. Phipps racetrack facility from the VIGL's Franchise Agreement, and that responsibility is shifting to Southland," Mr. Bryan further wrote. "Once the amendments to the Virgin Islands Code have been approved and the Southland agreements have been approved and ratified, the amendment to the VIGL Franchise Agreement will then be finalized."