

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Federal Agents Seize Aircraft in St. Thomas Suspected to be Used For Smuggling Operations

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Aircraft seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations (AMO) agents in St. Thomas on Tues., March 8 2022. By. U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

ST. THOMAS — U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations (AMO) agents seized an aircraft on Tuesday suspected of having been used for smuggling events, CBP Virgin Islands announced Thursday.

According to the release, during an arrest conducted in the fall of 2021, AMO agents working with Drug Enforcement Administration agents and U.S. Immigrations and

Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigation agents detected items in connection with past aviation smuggling events.

Through investigation of the arrested individual, agents learned an aircraft operated by the suspect had been flown by individuals without valid pilots' licenses, violating federal aviation laws.

"This seizure highlights the dedication and diligence of our agents," said Director Air and Marine Operation, Caribbean Air and Marine Branch, Augusto Reyes. "This case has taken months of work, but that effort is resulting in the prevention of potentially dangerous aircraft operation and end to the use of this smuggling vehicle."

CBP Virgin Islands said AMO agents located the aircraft at Cyril King Airport and seized it in accordance with federal law.

Investigation connected to the aircraft and suspect is ongoing.