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## New Inter-Island Airline Will be Based on St. Croix, Offer 8-10 Flights Daily, and Starts Late April

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**Fly the Whale will offer 8-10 flights between St. Croix and St. Thomas at the airports. The airline will be based on St. Croix.**

The new airline set to offer inter-island travel between the Henry E. Rohlsen and Cyril E. King Airports in the U.S. Virgin Islands expects to commence flights by the end of April, say people with knowledge of the matter, a huge development for residents who have long called for more flight options.

The airline, called Fly the Whale, currently operates charter flights in the Northeast, Florida, and The Bahamas, according to information found on its [website](#). The airline has already filed [legal documentation in the territory](#) with the Office of the Lt. Governor's Division of Corporations and

Trademarks, the Consortium can confirm.

Early last month, the V.I. Port Authority, led by its business-friendly Executive Director Carlton Dowe, said a new carrier providing inter-island flights [would start operations in 60 days](#). "Up to today the governor and I were in discussions with a new carrier that we believe will be able to get into this territory, doing an inter-island route within the next 60 days," Mr. Dowe told senators on the Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture on March 8. VIPA executives since 2019 have been in discussions with Fly the Whale, however the Covid-19 pandemic delayed plans.

Mr. Dowe did not comment on the Consortium's findings, but he pointed to comments he made last month during the Senate hearing.

Fly the Whale's arrival to the territory is expected to lead to ticket price reductions as competition heats up. The carrier will be based on St. Croix and will operate at least three planes to start, the people said. The aircraft are said to be just a little bigger than Cape Air planes and seat about 9 people.

In August 2022, the territory began to experience severe flight shortages between the islands because of a lack of pilots, among other issues. Mr. Dowe told lawmakers that the Covid-19 pandemic was to blame for the changes as well as demand by travelers to use "certain routes."

"We certainly feel the impact here in the U.S. Virgin Islands as we notice a lack of flights between St. Thomas and St. Croix due to retiring pilots or pilots who leave the territory to work for larger airlines," he said last month.

VIPA does business with Seaborne Airlines but the carrier no longer operates from the airport. Instead, it offers seaplane service downtown to downtown between St. Croix and St Thomas. Mr. Dowe said the airport operation was being conducted by Silver Airways, [which purchased Seaborne Airlines in 2018](#). Silver now provides service between San Juan and St. Croix.

In the meantime, a lease agreement valid through 2028 prevents other carriers from accessing the seaplane ramp at the Edward W. Blyden UV Marine Terminal in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, and the Svend Aage Ovesen Seaplane Facility in Christiansted, St. Croix.

"We have approached representatives of the airline to discuss the removal of the clause from the existing agreement. They have responded to let us know that they are considering the removal of the clause but to date no final decision has been made," Mr. Downe said.