

# INVESTOR EXCITEMENT FOR USVI TOURISM

MIAMI, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands Albert Bryan Jr. is extremely encouraged by the response of investors to the tourism opportunities and incentives offered by the Territory.

He noted that the potential of the U.S. Virgin Islands excited a lot of interest at last week's [Caribbean Hotel and Resort Investment Summit \(CHRIS\)](#), especially as he and the Territory's team broadcast a strong message "that we're open for business".

Federal resources being invested into the Territory's infrastructure, the governor reported, were powering his administration's plans for presenting St. Thomas as a top tier tourism product, and developing distinct identities for St. John and St. Croix.

Also fueling the excitement, he added, were the high number of arrivals at airports and strong cruise ship numbers returning after the 2017 storms.

The governor, who addressed a plenary conference session featuring heads of government from the British Virgin Islands and French St. Martin, said some investors were awed at the scale of incentives the USVI government offered businesses. "To have a destination in the United States, where you can get 100 percent exemption from your state taxes and 90 percent exemption from your federal income taxes, is just incredible."

Describing the importance of the industry, Governor Bryan asserted that tourism is an export business. "The hotel product is sold to people from foreign places. Getting them to our islands and getting them in the hotel is the battle but we don't actually make a lot of money directly off



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st CROIX st JOHN st THOMAS

United States Virgin Islands



Governor Albert Bryan Jr. addresses CHRIS delegates in Miami.

our hotels. It's the ability to house people who shop, eat, want to play, want to have different experiences in the Virgin Islands ... and that's where we derive great economic benefit as a government and a community," which was why, he said, his administration was focused on securing new developments.

In the cruise sector, the governor wanted to see passengers extend their time on shore, and convert one-day excursions to longer forays around the Territory. Such extensions, he added, would benefit the community economically.

Lamenting that no new hotel has been built for decades, he pledged his personal attention to the streamlining of official procedures so hotel developers could get new hotels operational quickly.

The governor said his priority tourism goals included the completion of the Long Bay Landing cruise pier project on St. Thomas, finishing the waterfront apron, revitalizing the Main Street area, adding new attractions and renovating the Territory's two airports. On St. Croix, in addition to breaking ground on a new hotel, he was looking forward to completing harbor dredging so smaller cruise ships can berth in Christiansted. Attracting more calls into Frederiksted was also critical.

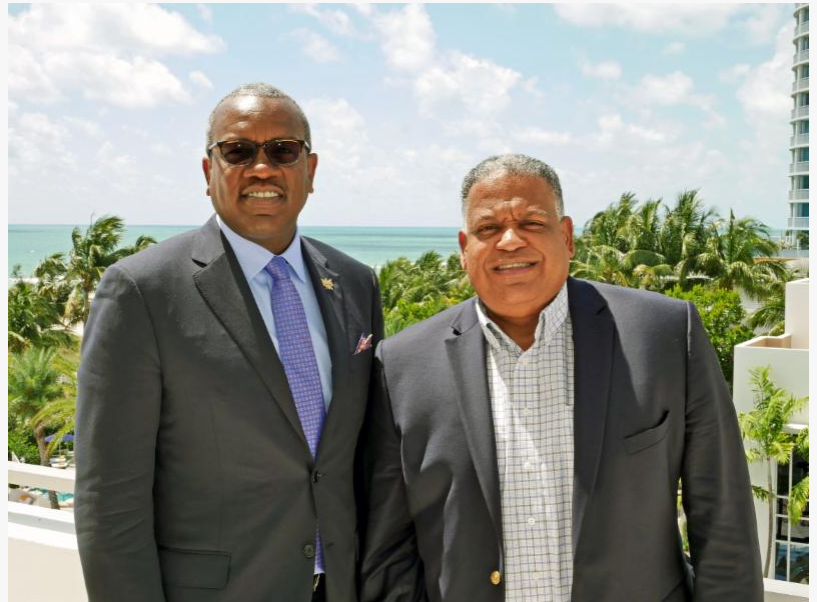
Kamal Latham, CEO of the U.S. Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority, joined David Bornn, Chief Legal Counsel in the Office of the Governor; Lisa Hamilton, President of the USVI Hotel and Tourism Association; and tax and business attorney Erika Kellerhals to address delegates on the opportunities available across the Virgin Islands; while Tourism Commissioner designee Joseph Boschulte spoke on a panel on "The Cultural and Experiential Value Proposition for Hotels/Resorts".

"This conference has put the U.S. Virgin Islands firmly in the minds of the investment community," said Commissioner Designee Boschulte, who said the government delegation had been busy meeting with developers, financiers and brands, who were very optimistic about doing business in the Territory.

Both Governor Bryan and Commissioner Designee Boschulte lauded CHRIS Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Sir Royston Hopkin of Spice Island Beach Resort in Grenada, and pledged the Territory's commitment to developing tourism across the region. "A rising tide lifts all boats," said Mr. Boschulte.



The USVI public and private sector delegation at CHRIS



Governor Albert Bryan Jr. (left) and Commissioner Designee Joseph Boschulte in Miami

During the conference, Commissioner Designee Boschulte and Governor Bryan teamed up for [an interview with Tim Padgett](#), the Americas editor for Miami NPR affiliate WLRN, about the success of the Territory's Purpose in Paradise "voluntourism" initiative where visitors combine good works with a good time.

About the U.S. Virgin Islands

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