

# Teri Helenese Urges Unified Caribbean Strategy to Boost Tourism Amid Global Economic Uncertainty

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Teri Helenese, the U.S. Virgin Islands' Director of State-Federal Relations and Washington Representative, is calling on Caribbean nations to unite with urgency and purpose to grow the region's global tourism market share, which has long remained under three percent despite a strong post-pandemic recovery.



Teri Helenese

Speaking against the backdrop of mounting global economic uncertainty, Helenese warned that continued growth cannot be taken for granted. "The U.S. Virgin Islands has outpaced pre-pandemic levels, and the wider Caribbean is seeing strong momentum, but we can't afford to be complacent," she said. "Now is the time to double down on strategic partnerships and regional cooperation."

Helenese commended the USVI Department of Tourism for its engagement with organizations like the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA), and the newly revitalized Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), noting that such alliances are critical to building a stronger, more coordinated Caribbean presence on the world stage.

Her remarks follow the release of the CTO's "Caribbean Tourism Performance Review 2024", which reported an estimated 34.2 million international tourist arrivals to the region – a 6.1 percent increase over 2023 and nearly seven percent above 2019 levels. The U.S. Virgin Islands was among top performers, recording a 41.8 percent growth in stayover visitors compared with pre-pandemic benchmark numbers.

"Global tourism is rebounding, but it's uneven. Major markets like the U.S., China and Germany are slowing. If we want to stay ahead, the Caribbean must think and act collectively," she said,

referencing recent World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) data showing record travel spend globally but a divergence in recovery patterns.

She called for greater intra-Caribbean connectivity, improved infrastructure, and a unified branding approach that speaks to the region's rich cultural diversity while promoting its shared strengths.

Echoing CTO Secretary-General Dona Regis-Prosper, Helenese said the Caribbean's continued growth is a testament to the region's resilience and collaboration — but its future will be shaped by the decisions leaders make today. "The global tourism pie is growing, and we deserve a bigger slice," she said.

"But we'll only get there by moving forward together and activating a bold, regional marketing strategy. In today's digital era, we have the tools to make it happen," she added. "A rising tide lifts all sails — a stronger U.S. Virgin Islands, a stronger St. Lucia, Barbados, and Jamaica, means a stronger Caribbean. When one of us wins, we all win — that's the mindset we need as we navigate this period of global recalibration."

#### About Teri Helenese

As the Director of State-Federal Relations and Washington Representative for the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, Teri Helenese plays a pivotal role in policy development and advocacy. She skillfully champions Governor Albert Bryan Jr.'s priorities, leveraging her deep understanding of policy formulation, powerful advocacy, and wide-reaching collaborations to drive meaningful change. From securing significant funding to pioneering initiatives for student support, affordable housing and economic development, her work spans a wide array of critical areas, contributing to the prosperity of the Virgin Islands.

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