



News Release

Virgin Islands Port Authority
Office of the Executive Director
Public Relations Department
P.O. Box 301707
St. Thomas, VI 00803-1707

Tel: (340) 774-1629
Tel: (340) 714-6640 / 714-6639
Fax: (340) 714-1492 / 774-0025
E-mail: info@viport.com
Internet: www.viport.com

For Immediate Release
February 24, 2015

Contact: Monifa Marrero Brathwaite
Public Information Officer
Tel: (340) 774-1629

Army Corp Approves Crown Bay East Gregorie Channel Dredging Permit

Virgin Islands Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe announced today that the permit to dredge the East Gregorie Channel in Crown Bay, St. Thomas was approved by the US Army Corp of Engineers yesterday. This completes the approval process for the permit. VIPA can now begin dredging the channel and the northern side of the Austin Monsanto Marine Terminal cruise ship pier to provide safer berthing conditions for large cruise vessels.

The dredging will cost about \$2.5 million. Dowe said that he expects the project to start immediately and it should be completed within four to five months. The project is funded via bond financing secured by the Port Authority last year.

Dowe stressed the importance of this final approval. “This dredging project is bigger than the Port Authority. If this dredging permit was not approved, the territory could have lost as much as 17 cruise ship calls to St. Thomas. This translates to about \$7 million in passenger and crew spending, \$382,980 in government gross receipt taxes and \$396,384 in port fees.” Dowe added that VIPA also faced the possibility of fines, based on previously negotiated berthing contracts with Princess and Holland American Line.

Dowe reminded the public that several large cruise port developments are occurring in the Caribbean, such as in the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, St. Lucia and St. Kitts. He added that it is critical that the US Virgin Islands invest in maintaining and developing its port facilities in order to remain key players in the fiercely competitive tourism industry.

The permit approval process, which could take up to five years to complete, was finalized in three years as a result of various agencies in the VI Government working together for the greater good of our economy, said Dowe. “I would like to thank former Governor John Percy deJongh; Governor Kenneth Mapp; former Delegate to Congress Donna Christiansen; the senators of the 30th and 31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands and the VI Coastal Zone Management Commission for all their assistance to the Port Authority during this process. I would also like to thank VIPA’s Assistant Executive Director David Mapp; our Director of Engineering Dale Gregory; our former Chief Financial Officer Valdamier Collens; our acting CFO Ann Penn; and our Legal Counsels Don Mills and Nycole Thompson who made the approval of this permit one of their top priorities for the past three years. I’m certain that when we work in the spirit of harmony and cooperation, all things are possible” Dowe said.

###