

## **BVI And U.S.V.I Strengthen Maritime Collaboration Through Continued Dialogue On Charter Vessel Fees**

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## British Virgin Islands and U.S. Virgin Islands Strengthen Maritime Collaboration Through Continued Dialogue on Charter Vessel Fees

Road Town, Tortola – April 16, 2025 — The Governments of the Virgin Islands (VI) and the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) have reaffirmed their commitment to regional cooperation and maritime collaboration following a second successful diplomatic meeting held in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas on 15th April, 2025

Premier of the Virgin Islands, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, and Governor of the US Virgin Islands, the Honourable Albert Bryan Jr., agreed to move forward with a shared vision for a thriving charter industry and mutual economic prosperity.

This latest meeting builds on the momentum of the initial discussions held on Tortola on 7th March 2025. Both parties have confirmed alignment on the proposed charter vessel fee structure, with minor adjustments in the spirit of regional partnership.

The Government of the Virgin Islands will formally present the revised legislation—the Commercial Recreational Vessel Licensing Act 1992 (CRVL)—the Amendment Bill has received its first reading on Tuesday 7th January in the 1st sitting of the Second Session of the 5th HOA. The bill's second reading is on the order paper of the current active sitting in the House of Assembly. The proposed amendment has been widely discussed and represents a significant step toward modernising the maritime sector and harmonising operations across the territory.

Premier Wheatley expressed his satisfaction with the progress made, stating: "I am pleased with the outcome of today's meeting. It reinforces our commitment to maintaining not only a strong and respectful relationship with our brothers and sisters in the US Virgin Islands, but also to ensuring that our stakeholders in the BVI charter industry continue to thrive in a supportive and forward-thinking regulatory environment."

In a forward-looking move, both territories agreed to establish a joint marine task force. This body will address regional policy, streamline regulations, embrace technological solutions to improve port efficiency, and bolster coastal protection.

Premier Wheatley emphasised that while 95 percent of terms were agreed upon, the Government remains open to further concessions in the spirit of friendship and cooperation with the USVI.

During the earlier March session, the Premier presented the new licensing fees as outlined in the CRVL. Following continued dialogue and industry feedback, the updated fee structure now being proposed includes:

- Term Charters (Foreign-based):
  - o \$7,500 per year for up to 7 entries;
  - o \$2,100 per additional entry; or
  - o \$24,000 annually for unlimited entries
- Day Trips:
  - o Revised to \$8,500 per year
- Water Taxis:
  - o Maintained at \$2,500 per year

This positive diplomatic engagement marks a new chapter in regional maritime cooperation and reflects the shared goal of fostering a vibrant, fair, and sustainable charter tourism sector.