



June 11, 2016

Honorable Myron D. Jackson  
Senator  
Legislature of the Virgin Islands  
Capitol Building, Charlotte Amalie  
St. Thomas, VI 00804

Dear Senator Jackson:

Thank you for the invitation to provide testimony on Sports Tourism Facilities and the findings of the February 5 Hearing on Coki Point. I am unable to participate in Monday's hearings as I leave the Territory on Sunday, June 12<sup>TH</sup> for Tourism work.

My recent testimony on Sports Tourism outlines the Department of Tourism's position on this matter, and our strategy related to the marketing of Sports Tourism is on the record. Honestly, the Department of Tourism does not have the requisite knowledge related to sports facilities to provide meaningful testimony on this matter.

Regarding Coki Point, the Department of Tourism was pleased to facilitate several inter-agency meetings following the February 5 Hearing on a temporary basis. The reports from each agency are attached. Without the statutory authority to lead this effort, the Department of Tourism has discontinued the meetings.

The management of Coki Point falls under the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation and inter-agency operations are led by the Office of the Governor. As such, the St. Thomas/Water Island Administrator has been engaged in this dialog.

While I cannot join you at the hearing, I hope it is a productive session.

Sincerely,

*Beverly Nicholson-Doty*

Beverly Nicholson-Doty  
Commissioner of Tourism



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS™  
ST.CROIX ST.JOHN ST.THOMAS  
VISITUSVI.COM

## **Executive Summary of Coki Point Visitor Experience Agency Coordination**

The Office of Senator Myron Jackson tasked the Department of Tourism with coordinating a multi-agency effort to address growing concerns of present issues on Coki Point Beach which affects the “Visitor Experience.”

As a result, these agencies, the Department of Sports Parks and Recreation, Department of Health, Virgin Island Police Department, Taxi Commission, Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs and Waste Management Authority, were invited to meet for the purpose of providing insight on the growing problems, and to collaborate on short and long term action planning to address identified problems. *(The Office of Senator Marvin Blyden and the STT/STJ Administrator were also invited to attend and participated in subsequent meetings.)*

The initial meetings and a subsequent site visit by a collective group of representatives from each agency, revealed a myriad of troubling concerns plaguing the beach. These included but are not limited to:

- Unsightly and unfriendly entrance;
- An unfriendly business atmosphere;
- Undocumented workers;
- Illegal activity;
- Random trash removal for what was described as public vs private property;
- Untrained and discourteous staff all hired as independent workers;
- Vendors operating with expired business licenses;
- various unlawful activity;
- Traffic congestion;
- Annoying Barkers hustling passengers as they approach the beach;
- Businesses in violation of health and food safety codes;
- Limited police patrol; and
- A family grave yard in need of regular care.

Each respective agency was then tasked with making independent visits to the beach to address identified concerns based on their oversight responsibility. They were to report back with-in 30 days at the second coordination meeting. With-in the first 30 days of coordinated efforts, immediate actions were implemented by the Department of Health, Licensing and Consumer Affairs and the Virgin Islands Police Department *(reflected in the attached reports).*

At the final meeting, specific actions were discussed and each participant was requested to provide next-steps to ensure consistency with the implemented actions, which included: Coordinated community clean-ups, Law Enforcement compliance operations, and written long-term Agency Action Plans.

The Offices of the Administrator and Senator Marvin Blyden agreed to lead the community clean-up; Virgin Islands Police Department lead the Law Enforcement Compliance Operation. After action reports were submitted by Department of Sports Parks and Recreation, Virgin Island Police Department, and the Office of the Administrator.

The following reports are the collective summaries of the agencies immediate and long term action plans to address the Visitor Experience concerns:



OFFICE OF  
THE COMMISSIONER

GOVERNMENT OF  
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES  
-0-

**DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, PARKS AND RECREATION**

8201 SUBBASE, SUITE 2  
CHARLOTTE AMALIE, VI 00802-5813



Phone: (340) 774-0255

Fax: (340) 774-4600

From:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rudy Clarke  
Grounds and Maintenance Coordinator

Date: May 11, 2016,

RE: **Coki Point Beach Facility Report**

Over the past six months, Coki Point Beach has undergone physical enhancements and repairs to the facility focused on improving the security and experience for beachgoers and tourists.

The following improvements were implemented:

- A security camera system on the property monitored in the Sports Parks and Recreation office. The cameras are able to view from several locations; a large section of beach, the vendor's parking lot and the driveway entry point. Virgin Islands Police Department has access to monitor cameras as needed.
- All Coki Point vendors were inspected for valid business licenses. Vendors with expired business license were given 30 days to produce a current license.
- Police presence has increased daily when cruise ships are in port. The increased presence, has helped greatly to improve traffic flow and prevent theft which was a major concern to us.

- A Taxi Stand was added in November. Greatly reducing the wait time for cruise ship passengers and other tourist in need of a taxi. This also helps to reduce traffic congestion.
- An employee has been hired to clean the restrooms for four hours daily. The hours are flexible to provide maximum coverage.
- Other physical enhancements in progress includes painting the rest rooms.  
(Inclement weather and heavy traffic on multiple ship days has affected the scheduled but the team continues to work as the season slows down)
- The garbage crew is now disposing trash from the beach twice daily.
- Public Works assisted with cutting back the tree branches that were hanging over into the road striking vehicles as they arrived and is currently repairing a damaged section of the road at the entrance that presented a major hazard.
- We are presently working on providing the waiters and waitresses of Coki Point beach with SPR identification cards.

Presently, we have one Lifeguard on duty five days a week, which is a big concern at the beach. Any day without a lifeguard is not a good one. We have had unfortunate incidents occurred while Lifeguards were not on duty or out for lunch. Beachgoers provided assistance in those cases. We have a total of three lifeguards for three beaches. We need at least two for Coki Point Beach and one “on duty” at all times.

CC: Pedro Cruz, Commissioner  
Calvert White, Assistant Commissioner



**DARREN M. FOY**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**  
 ST. Thomas/ST. John



**Government of**  
**The United States Virgin Islands**  
 - 0 -  
**VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE**



ALEXANDER A. FARRELLY  
 JUSTICE CENTER  
 CHARLOTTE AMALIE  
 ST. THOMAS, V.I. 00802  
 (340) 715-5548

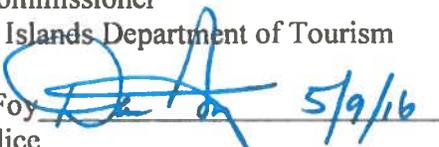
LEANDER JURGEN  
 COMMAND  
 CRUZ BAY  
 ST. JOHN, V.I. 00830  
 (340) 693-8880

POLICE OPERATIONS AND  
 ADMINISTRATIVE  
 SERVICES  
 # 45 MARS HILL,  
 FREDERIKSTED  
 ST. CROIX, V.I. 00841

PATRICK SWEENEY  
 HD'QTRS.  
 RR-02, KINGHILL  
 ST. CROIX V.I. 00850  
 (340) 778-2211

May 9, 2016

TO: Joyce Dore-Griffin  
 Assistant Commissioner  
 U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism

FROM: Darren M. Foy  5/9/16  
 Chief of Police  
 St. Thomas/St. John District

SUBJECT: VIPD REPORT WITH ACTION PLAN AND PROGRESS

Various agencies collaborating on the “Coki Point Visitor Experience” coordination project at the Department of Tourism office for the opening meeting. The purpose of the meeting was for participants to identify issues plaguing Coki Point beach (the beach), and develop action plans to correct those issues. The group collectively identified several issues plaguing the beach. Those of police enforcement concern included:

- Lack of Police presence (walking the beach, being assertive towards violations);
- Traffic jams;
- parking in unauthorized areas; and
- general criminal activities.

At the second group meeting held on March 9, 2016, the following action items were provided identifying how VIPD was going to address previously identified issues:

- Three primary police officers will be assigned to cover the Coki Point assignment (two officers will be assigned daily on cruise ship days from the list of three);
- The two officers will issue citations, monitor the traffic flow and parking, and walk the entire beach;
- Address illegal activities that are reported and make frequent inspections of the areas where illegal activities have occurred; and
- Monitor the camera system.

The final meeting of the group was on April 5, 2016. VIPD reported on continued efforts to address the previously identified issues. These continued actions included:

- Consistent camera monitoring by the officers in the Housing Parks office (video surveillance of various areas on Coki Point).
- Coordinated Compliance Operation date set for April 12, 2016; and
- Assistance with Clean-up of abandon cars and boats.

The objective of the VIPD as it relates to Coki Point Beach is to provide consistent law enforcement presence to address previous or newly identified issues plaguing the beach. The officers of the Mariel C. Newton Command "Zone C" has created a Beach initiative that is presently manned by Officers Nigel John, Davina Van Holten, Jason Thomas, and the assistance of other police officers on heavy cruise ship days with the main purpose of reducing and eliminating drug sales and other criminal activities on or around the beach area. This will provide a safe environment for our residents and tourist. All-terrain-vehicles (ATV) will be used to provide the officers with flexibility and mobility needed to patrol a beach environment.

The VIPD spearheaded the coordinated Compliance Operation on April 12, 2016 jointly with the Office of the Administrator and the other agencies conducting the Coki Beach Clean-up Initiative. The other agencies were Waste Management, Department of Health, Licensing & Consumer Affairs, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Public Works, and Taxi Commission. To avoid the appearance of a Law Enforcement Raid, the arrival times of the involved agencies were staggered.

The operation included vendor inspections for work permits and health and safety standards. The residential properties were inspected for abandon vehicles and vessels that created an eye-sore and/or a hazard to the environment. During the Compliance Operation, two officers were assigned to the roadway to monitor the flow of traffic and issue traffic citations. Additional officers were assigned to patrol the beachfront as an extra security measure based on the volume of beach activity with five cruise ships on island.

At the completion of the inspection, one vendor was sited and closed pending installation of required operational equipment. A waitress unable to produce a food handler's cards was instructed to cease serving food. Vendors were informed of their boundaries as it relates to Coral World and the Taxi Stand. Taxi drivers were likewise educated by the Taxi Commission Officers on their boundaries as it relates to the boardwalk vendors.

Agencies involved attended an after action briefing at Mariel C. Newton Command lead by Lieutenant Sandra Colbourne, Commander of the Mariel C. Newton Command. Agencies were advised of the follow-up plan scheduled on April 21<sup>st</sup> to remove all tagged vehicles and vessels from the surrounding area of the beach.

The VIPD action plan is to provide full daily police coverage on cruise ship days and modified coverage on days with no ships, utilizing the "park walk and talk inspections". VIPD will enforce all laws and ordinances as it pertains to the safety and wellbeing of everyone who frequents the beach. VIPD will actively address taxi driver violations and issue citations with the assistance of the Taxi Commission as needed. VIPD will monitor the camera system to assist with the security of Coki Point Beach. Most importantly, VIPD will maintain the consistency of providing police presence and address issues of police enforcement concerns that are plaguing Coki Point Beach daily.



## THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802  
340-774-0001

### OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR St. Thomas & Water Island “Plan, Organize, Execute”

**Merwin C. Potter, Sr.**  
**Administrator**

May 27, 2016

Beverly Nicholson-Doty  
Commissioner, USVI Department of Tourism  
2318 Kronprindsens Gade  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00804

Dear Commissioner Nicholson-Doty

This letter seeks to request pertinent follow-up information regarding the meeting dates listed below that was orchestrated through the USVI Department of Tourism, relative to Coki point establishments on public and private property, as well as the purified maintenance of Coki Point's beach entrance and surrounding areas.

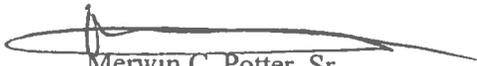
- On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a meeting was held with the Bell family at Attorney David Bourne's office regarding the government's involvement of leasing property. No applicable solution was brought forth in the meeting, and the issue still remains in the assessment phase at the Department of Property & Procurement.
- On April 12, 2016, a soft touch compliance operation task force initiative was held at Coki Point Beach, wherein several agencies was involved to include the Virgin Islands Police Department, Department of Planning & Natural Resources, Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority, Department of Licensing & Consumers Affairs, Department of Public Works, Department of Health, division of Environmental Health, Department of Sports Parks and Recreation, Taxi Cab Commission, and the St. Thomas-Water Island Administrator's office.
  - During this operation several business were cited and closed for health compliance reasons through the division of Environmental Health.
  - Several business owners addressed their concerns relative to the approach of taxi drivers soliciting business for personal gain through the use of backers.
  - Several business owners were given verbal warnings by the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs relative to business license compliance.

- Beach-related rental equipment owners were issued warnings in an effort to minimize the solicitation of patrons on Coral World's property and/or the entrance to Coki Point.
  - The issue of price gauging between business and individuals working on the beach for more than one business were discussed.
- On April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, a Coki Point clean-up was conducted from the entrance to Coki Point towards the beach. Also, clean up efforts were made to the property belonging to the King and Bell families, respectively.
- Approximately six (6) boats and three (3) abandoned vehicles were removed from several properties and were taken to land fill.
  - Truck load of major debris was removed from the King's and Bell's family properties at the entrance to Coki Point Beach
  - Individual property owners participated in the cleanup effort, wherein some residents utilized government bins and equipment

Your immediate attention regarding the above request will be greatly appreciated. I am available to meet with you or your staff to discuss the matter above in an effort to create a solution. Kindly contact my office at (340) 693-4350 to set this meeting.

Thanks in advance for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Merwin C. Potter, Sr.  
St. Thomas-Water Island Administrator