

BILL NO. 36-0222

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

January 12, 2026

An act designating January 27, 2026 as St. John Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise Day and appropriating \$50,000 from the Tourism Revolving Fund to the Department of Tourism to organize and host festivities in celebration of St. John Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise Day

PROPOSED BY: Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr.

1 **WHEREAS**, the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise was established in 2002 and is a
2 fully chartered seven-day themed cruise that features live music from a lineup of famous blues
3 and R and B artists; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise has visited the Virgin Islands
5 many times over the past years. Its predecessor, Blues Cruise Company, held one-day blues
6 festivals during its January 1996 and January 1997 visits to Frederiksted, St. Croix; and

7 **WHEREAS**, on January 26, 2011, the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise made its
8 maiden voyage to Cruz Bay, St. John aboard the Holland America MS Eurodam, carrying more
9 than 2,000 passengers; and

1 **WHEREAS**, during its first visit to Cruz Bay, the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise
2 organizers, in conjunction with the Department of Tourism, conducted blues-in-the-schools
3 programs at the Guy Benjamin Elementary School, the Gift Hill School and the Julius E.
4 Sprauve School and held music festivals in both Cruz Bay and Coral Bay; and

5 **WHEREAS**, on January 25, 2017, the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise visited Cruz
6 Bay where its organizers again conducted blues-in-the-school programs and held performances
7 by artists from aboard the ship in several Cruz Bay venues; and

8 **WHEREAS**, on January 27, 2026, the Holland America MS Nieuw Statendam, with its
9 full compliment of 2,666 passengers and 1,053 crew, will again call on Cruz Bay St. John;

10 **WHEREAS**, the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise is known to carry passengers from
11 almost every state in the nation and over 15 countries; and

12 **WHEREAS**, representatives from several major blues review magazines will be on
13 board to cover events for their respective magazines, including events that take place in ports;
14 and

15 **WHEREAS**, the visit of the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise to Cruz Bay St. John
16 will afford the Virgin Islands an excellent opportunity to advertise and promote among the
17 cruisers and other day visitors, “overnight stays” in the Virgin Islands, and to maximize this
18 opportunity, it is fitting to host entertainment, including cultural and promotional activities for
19 cruise passengers while in port;

20 **WHEREAS**, the organizers of the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise are enthusiastic
21 about once again sharing blues music with the community and participating in cultural
22 activities while in port; and

1 **WHEREAS**, with the assistance of the Department of Tourism and the participation of
2 blues cruise organizers, St. John Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise Day will be enjoyed by
3 visitors and residents alike; Now, Therefore,

4 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

5 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin
6 Islands, notably the people of St. John, welcome the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise and
7 the passengers and crew aboard the Holland America MS Nieuw Statendam to visit and enjoy
8 St. John.

9 **SECTION 2.** The Legislature of the Virgin Islands designates January 27, 2026 as the
10 “St. John Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise Day”.

11 **SECTION 3.** (a) The Department of Tourism shall organize and host a program
12 celebrating St. John Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise Day, that includes:

13 (1) a welcoming ceremony conducted by St. John community leaders and
14 officials;

15 (2) a mini blues festival in the Franklin A. Powell, Sr. Park in Cruz Bay that
16 includes both Blues Cruise bands and local bands;

17 (3) a blues-in-the-schools program; and

18 (4) such other cultural and promotional activities as the Department of Tourism
19 considers appropriate.

20 (b) All departments and agencies of the Government of the Virgin Islands shall assist
21 the Department of Tourism, as requested, to carry out the purposes of this act.

22 **SECTION 4.** (a) The sum of \$50,000 is appropriated from the Tourism Advertising
23 Revolving Fund to the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism in the fiscal year ending

1 September 30, 2026, to organize and host the program to celebrate “St. John Legendary Rhythm
2 & Blues Cruise Day” as provided in section 3.

3 (b) The sum appropriated in subsection (a) must be made available to the Department
4 of Tourism on or before January 9, 2026.

5 **BILL SUMMARY**

6 This bill designates January 27, 2026 as St. John Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise
7 Day and appropriates \$50,000 from the Tourism Revolving Fund to the Department of Tourism
8 to organize and host festivities in celebration of St. John Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise
9 Day.

10 **BR25-0918/January 7, 2026/GC**