

BILL NO. 35-0389

Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

October 16, 2024

An Act to allow the operation of casinos on cruise ships while docked in St. Croix, Virgin Islands

PROPOSED BY: Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr., by Request of the Governor

WHEREAS, the operation of casinos in St. Croix was legalized by the passage of the Virgin Islands Casino and Resort Control Act of 1995; and

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission has general responsibility to hear and promptly decide on all license, registration, certificate, and permit applications, and matters affecting the granting, suspension, revocation, or renewal thereof; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Act No. 6287, cruise ships docked at the piers in St. Thomas and St. John may operate their onboard casinos for use by their passengers only; and

WHEREAS, by allowing cruise ships to operate their onboard casinos for their passengers only, while docked in St. Croix, will incentivize more cruise ship calls to St. Croix and encourage the cruise ships to remain in port for longer periods of time while also providing

guests and crew with an opportunity to engage more deeply with the unique culture of St. Croix;

Now, Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. (a) Title 25 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 17, section 501 is amended as follows:

(a) by striking the language after “St. Thomas” and inserting “, St. John, or St. Croix may operate their onboard casinos after 5:00 p.m. for their passengers only while anchored or docked in port, or at any time of day while otherwise within the territorial waters of the Virgin Islands.”; and

(b) by designating the existing language as subsection (a) and adding a subsection (b) that reads:

“(b) For purposes of this section, “casinos” includes table games, slot machines, and any other gambling activity typically offered by casinos aboard cruise ships.”

BILL SUMMARY

This bill allows cruise ships docked St. Croix to operate onboard casinos for their passengers within Virgin Islands waters.

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