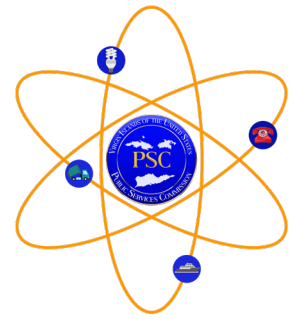




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PSC Approves Temporary Ferry Fuel Surcharge and Advances Ferry Rate Review

U.S. Virgin Islands — The Virgin Islands Public Services Commission (PSC) approved a temporary 66-cent per-ticket emergency fuel surcharge for the St. Thomas/St. John Ferry, Franchise operators during its June meeting. The surcharge will remain in effect for 90 days and was approved alongside a waiver of the standard 30-day public notice requirement.

The Commission’s action follows petitions submitted by ferry operators citing significant increases in diesel fuel costs resulting from global market disruptions and geopolitical events affecting fuel supply chains.

PSC staff and consultants reviewed fuel-cost data and operational information before recommending the temporary surcharge. Calculations presented during the meeting determined that a 66-cent surcharge would help offset documented increases in fuel expenses while maintaining service continuity.

In addition to approving the surcharge, the Commission continued discussions regarding ferry-system transparency and long-term rate structures. Commissioners reviewed recommendations from the Hearing Examiner’s final report concerning the St. John ferry franchises, including proposals for independent third-party ticketing systems, enhanced auditing procedures, and additional review of labor and fuel expenses.

Chairman David Hughes emphasized the need for stronger fuel-consumption verification methods during future audits.

“The goal here at the end of the day is we want to understand how much fuel is consumed in a year, or a month, or a quarter, so that we can use that to determine whether or not the fuel projection expense that is being offered to us in the reports by the ferry boat companies is accurate,” Hughes said.

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The Commission also opened discussions on future fare structures aimed at providing greater affordability for Virgin Islands residents while maintaining the financial viability of ferry operations. Concepts discussed included reduced resident fares and potential fare adjustments for students, seniors, and commuters.

PSC staff will continue reviewing ferry operational data, fuel and labor audits, and revenue requirements before presenting additional recommendations to the Commission at a future meeting.

The Public Services Commission remains committed to ensuring that ferry services throughout the Territory remain safe, reliable, transparent, and financially sustainable for residents and visitors alike.

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