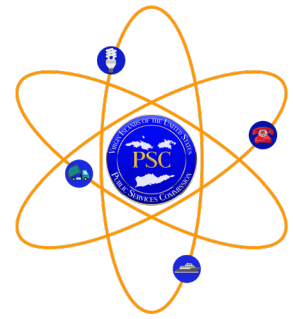




**Government of the United States Virgin Islands
Public Services Commission**

psc.vi.gov
psc.info@psc.vi.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

009-26-01

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Media Contact:

Symra Hendrickson – Public Communication Coordinator

(340) 776-1291

symra.hendrickson@psc.vi.gov

**PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION ADDRESSES FERRY FUEL SURCHARGE AND
RATE INVESTIGATION MATTERS**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — The Virgin Islands Public Services Commission (PSC) addressed several matters affecting inter-island ferry transportation during its Regular Meeting held Tuesday, September 8, 2026, including the continuation of the emergency fuel surcharge and pending matters associated with the Commission's Ferry Rate Investigation under Docket No. 691.

The Commission considered a request from ferry operators to extend the existing \$0.66 per passenger emergency fuel surcharge for an additional 90 days. Representatives of the ferry companies explained that continued fuel costs are placing financial pressure on ferry operations and cited the surcharge as necessary to help offset those expenses.

During discussion, Commissioners also considered whether the \$0.66 surcharge creates operational challenges at ticket counters because of the need to provide exact change. Alternatives of \$0.75 and \$1.00 were discussed, with the \$1.00 option raised as a possible way to simplify cash transactions.

Commissioner Raymond Williams questioned whether increasing the surcharge primarily for operational convenience could be justified without supporting financial data. Commissioners also requested additional information on surcharge collections, ridership, the percentage of passengers paying by cash compared with electronic payment, and whether the need to make change materially affects passenger loading times and ferry schedules.

Representatives of the ferry operators indicated that detailed surcharge revenue data was not immediately available during the meeting. Delrise Varlack of Varlack Ventures also noted that ridership has declined during the slower tourism season and offered to provide additional data on ridership and surcharge collections.

Following discussion, Commissioner Raymond Williams moved to extend the existing \$0.66 emergency fuel surcharge for an additional 30 days. He directed PSC staff to analyze the financial and operational impacts of maintaining the surcharge at \$0.66 compared with a potential adjustment to \$0.75 per ticket.

**P.O. Box 40 St. Thomas, VI 00804
1003 Estate Ross Suite 4, St.
Thomas, VI, 00802
(340) 776-1291**

**P.O. Box 7360 Christiansted, VI 00823
Estate Carlton Suite 1 & 2 Frederiksted,
St. Croix, VI, 00840
(340) 778-6010**

The Commission clarified that the motion does not authorize an increase to \$0.75 at this time. The surcharge will remain at \$0.66 for the next 30 days while additional financial and operational data are gathered and evaluated.

Commissioners Laura Nichols-Samms, Raymond Williams, and Chairman David Hughes voted in favor of the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Commission also considered two proposed assessments associated with Docket No. 691, the Commission's Ferry Rate Investigation. The assessments, which are typically handled administratively, were brought before the Commission following objections raised by the ferry companies.

During discussion, Commissioners expressed concern that they had not received sufficient staff analysis and supporting information to fully evaluate the disputed assessments. With additional review and analysis needed before a determination could be made, the Commission agreed to continue both matters until its next meeting.

The Commission approved motions to continue consideration of the proposed assessments under Docket No. 691 and directed PSC staff to provide Commissioners with reports and supporting information addressing the disputed matters prior to their return for consideration.

Commissioners Laura Nichols-Samms, Raymond Williams, and Chairman David Hughes voted in favor of continuing the matters and obtaining the additional staff analysis.

As a result, no final determination was made on the disputed assessments during Tuesday's meeting. The matters will be returned to the Commission following additional staff review and distribution of the requested information to Commissioners.

The Commission emphasized the importance of having adequate financial, operational, and regulatory information before making decisions affecting ferry operators and the traveling public. The PSC will continue its regulatory oversight of ferry transportation services to ensure that matters affecting rates, operations, and passengers are evaluated through a transparent and data-informed process.

###

For recent news releases, more information on the PSC, and easy access to information on utility issues, visit our website at psc.vi.gov. Like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/VIPSC1965.