

Johnson Rejects J'Ouvert Date Change, Predicts "Nothing but Problems" and "Chaos" for Frederiksted

Senator Franklin Johnson warned that holding J'Ouvert, the Food Fair, and two cruise ship arrivals on December 31 will overwhelm Frederiksted, saying vendors will struggle to bring food down while taxi drivers try to move cruise passengers to their tours.

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St. Croix J'Ouvert 2029. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

Senator Franklin Johnson has taken issue with a decision to reschedule a major event on the Crucian Christmas Festival's calendar, anticipating "chaos" in Frederiksted.

On Monday, [the Consortium reported](#) that the popular J'Ouvert event will take place on Wednesday, December 31, 2025, beginning at sunrise. The Food Fair, another Festival staple,

follows at 12 p.m. Two cruise ships are expected to dock in St. Croix on that very day.

The decision to reschedule the event was largely guided by concerns expressed by the V.I. Police Department. This was confirmed by Jennifer Matarangas-King, commissioner-nominee at the Department of Tourism. She appeared before the Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture on Monday, where she informed lawmakers that VIPD “expressed a plethora of concerns, including staffing and shortages.”

She added that VIPD “talked about gunshots” and a “series of things” that influenced the move. Though responsible for the planning of the Crucian Christmas Festival, Ms. Matarangas-King stated that they chose to “defer to the subject matter experts.” Though the Department offered suggestions to “augment the staffing,” Ms. Matarangas-King stated that VIPD “indicated that those were not possibilities.”

With two major events and an influx of passengers from two cruise ships on the same day, public safety is of utmost importance. The Police Department, Ms. Matarangas-King said, “assured us that it would be better for them to manage all of that at the same time.” She offered a “best case scenario” where “locals and visitors will have an opportunity to have two authentic experiences.”

“At the end of the day, the VIPD, they are there to protect us, and this was their advice to us,” she maintained. “I’m not managing the manpower, and I’m not managing security, and I don’t want to be in a situation where we go against the police department and there is an issue.”

Though respectful of the Department’s decision, Senator Johnson opposed the shift in dates.

“I don’t agree [with] having Food Fair, a tourist ship in town and J’Ouvert on the same day. Only God could come and tell me different,” Senator Johnson declared.

He suggested that the challenges will be threefold. “The same time that J’Ouvert going on is the same time them people try to bring food down, and it’s the same time the taxi man is trying to get tourists to go on their tour,” he said.

Senator Johnson maintained that “it’s chaos we’re going to create.”

“I call it as I see it, and I see nothing but problems,” he said. Notwithstanding his misgivings, J’Ouvert will take place on December 31.