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Jennifer Matarangas-King Pledges People-First, Culture-Centered Leadership as She Is Sworn In as Tourism Commissioner

Jennifer Matarangas-King was sworn in Thursday as Tourism Commissioner after serving in an acting capacity, vowing to grow the industry while protecting culture and environment, as Gov. Bryan stressed tourism's central role in the territory's economy.

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Nelcia Charlemagne **January 15, 2026**

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Jennifer Matarangas-King is sworn in as Commissioner of Tourism during a formal ceremony on St. Croix. By. GOV'T HOUSE.

Jennifer Matarangas-King is now officially the Commissioner of the Department of Tourism, having been sworn in at a formal ceremony in St. Croix on Thursday.

Ms. Matarangas-King has been acting in the position for several months. She was dealt the proverbial baptism by fire, having to oversee the 2025 edition of the Crucian Christmas Festival.

“It's a privilege to return to government service and to share my qualifications, my vision and my unwavering commitment to the people and culture of these islands,” Ms. Matarangas-King said, beaming throughout her written remarks.

She assured the people of the Virgin Islands, whom she will serve, that her vast experience equipped her with the “experience and perspective necessary to lead our tourism strategy with both creativity and discipline.”

“I bring both a global perspective and a profound local understanding and love for my community,” Ms. Matarangas-King said. She says that policies implemented under her leadership must “ultimately benefit the people of the Virgin Islands.” For the new commissioner, this means “creating meaningful opportunities for our residents, promoting our culture and authenticity and building an industry that is resilient, inclusive, and future focused.”

Ms. Matarangas-King has promised to balance “progress with preservation.” She also intends to expand partnerships, invest in workforce development and enhance the visitor experience “while safeguarding the culture, environment and heritage that define us.”

Equally important, said Ms. Matarangas-King, is the DOT's commitment to “strengthening local engagement, ensuring that those directly and indirectly connected to the tourism industry feel informed, included and empowered.”

Jennifer Matarangas-King takes over the role from Joseph Boschulte, who returned to the West Indian Company Limited. She spoke highly of his support during the transition period.

So too did Governor Albert Bryan Jr. during Thursday's ceremony. “You have to give Joe his jacket. You can see from his work, especially on this island, where we went from 50,000 cruise passengers to 250,000 cruise passengers,” the governor stated.

Turning to Ms. Matarangas-King, he lauded her experience and the capabilities that she brings to the role. The appointment as commissioner is “a tremendous responsibility,” noted Governor Bryan. “There's an incredible amount of pressure on her,” he added.

The Department of Tourism is regarded as one of the more critical government departments.

“They do bring the dollars in, a lot of dollars. And a lot of times we don't think about it, but Tourism is probably the most important department in our government because if there's no money, nothing else can happen,” Governor Bryan declared.

He has already stated high expectations of Ms. Matarangas-King and the Department of Tourism ahead of the St. Thomas Carnival season.