

VIRGIN ISLANDS WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
STATEMENT BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, YOUTH & RECREATION
MARCH 27, 2015

1 Good morning, Honorable Chairman Jackson, other Honorable Members of the Senate
2 Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth & Recreation and the 31th Legislature, and
3 to the viewing and listening audience. As always, I would like to thank you for this opportunity
4 to appear before you to inform and update the Legislature, our colleagues, and the general
5 public on the affairs of the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority as it relates to today's
6 discussion.

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8 I am Steven Aubin, Chief Operating Officer of the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority
9 and currently Acting Executive Director while Ms. May Adams Cornwall, Executive Director, is
10 out of the territory. Here with me today is Mr. Mario Leonard, Director of Solid Waste for the
11 St. Thomas/St. John/Water Island District.

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13 In my testimony today, I will provide an overview of the services provided by the Authority
14 during the territory's three main annual celebrations, the St. Croix Carnival, St. Thomas
15 Carnival, and the St. John Celebration. Essentially, the Authority provides all solid waste
16 management & cleanup functions during and after each of the planned events over the course
17 of the approximately 1-month long celebrations. Equally important, we also deploy our
18 enforcement officers during the events to ensure the vendors & participants of the various
19 venues follow all applicable solid waste laws and regulations.

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21 Prior to each respective annual celebration, the Authority attends team planning meetings
22 hosted by the Office of the Governor's respective island Administrator and the Carnival or
23 Celebration Committee. Event schedules are reviewed and budgets, challenges, plans, and
24 requests by the various team partners are discussed. Based on the results of said meetings,
25 the Authority plans and executes the required functions to carry out solid waste and
26 enforcement services as further described below:

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29 **Solid Waste Management & Cleanup**

30 In terms of solid waste services, the Authority supplies and stations all temporary waste
31 containers and related supplies utilized at each planned event such as the competition shows,
32 parades, races, tramps, and at the annual village installments. We also provide all labor and
33 equipment, both in-house and contracted, to monitor the stationed waste receptacles and to
34 routinely empty them and transfer said waste to our collection trucks or staged roll off bins
35 stationed nearby. At the end of each event and after each nightly closing of the village, we
36 provide a thorough cleanup of all event sites and surrounding streets immediately to ensure
37 that the impacted town or neighborhood is clean by the following morning. At the end of the
38 overall celebration, typically after the closing night of the village, our team performs a final
39 cleanup of the impacted areas. At the villages and other facilities such as the stadiums, we also
40 arrange for used cooking oil collection services for the booth owners to have a convenient
41 centralized location to dispose of used cooking oil at any time. Finally as part of our
42 carnival/celebration budget we have traditionally provided sanitary supplies used by the
43 Department of Public Works staff to maintain and restock the public restrooms that are located
44 in or near the villages or stadiums.

45

46 In terms of labor needs, the annual celebrations have substantial manpower requirements. To
47 meet the need, the Authority routinely engages several contracted cleanup crews to augment
48 our in-house solid waste crews in order to provide efficient and timely cleanup of events and
49 sites noted above. Typically, we engage six contract work crews on St. Thomas, one on St.
50 Croix, and four on St. John. Each contract crew consists of a team leader and 5-8 laborers
51 depending on the respective island. Both our in-house staff and contractor teams are
52 supervised during each event by our in-house solid waste supervisors on duty for the respective
53 events. In recent years we have procured and executed the contract services with a 2-year
54 contract term to obtain lower contract rates and to optimize our time dedicated to the
55 procurement of this annual service by our staff and management. Prior to the beginning of
56 each celebration, our staff prepares work schedules for in-house staff and contract teams to

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57 ensure that adequate coverage of the various events is achieved and that the various teams get
58 uniform quantities of assignments over the course of the month long schedule. The Authority
59 meets with the contractor pool to review and clarify the schedules and any questions the
60 contractors may have regarding the upcoming events. During the course of the celebration, our
61 management and supervisory staff track all in-house and contractor assignments and respective
62 hours worked. At the end of the celebrations, all contractor hours and corresponding invoices
63 are reviewed and approved for payment processing.

64

65 **Enforcement Services**

66 In terms of Environmental Enforcement, our enforcement officers are scheduled and deployed
67 during most of the planned events and during each operational day of the village. They
68 perform inspections and spot checks on booths and other areas to ensure applicable laws and
69 regulations are being followed. Our peace officers also provide support & backup to the Virgin
70 Islands Police Department's on-duty officers at the various parades and during shows or village
71 operational hours to help maintain a safe environment for our citizens and visitors alike. To
72 adequately provide said enforcement services at the numerous events, the Authority typically
73 will assign officers from the opposite district to augment the other during the events to provide
74 coverage for normal non-event enforcement activities in the daytime and the celebration
75 events so that the officers are not overworked with excessive or long shifts.

76

77 Finally as part of our mandate to promote a clean environment, the Authority carries out its
78 "Bag-It-Up" campaign at the respective children and adult parades on an annual basis. Our
79 officers and staff volunteers, including our mascot "The Litter Critter", traverse the parade
80 route prior to the start of each parade and we dispense small trash bags to the attendees along
81 the route for the purpose of storing their solid waste during the event. The filled bags are then
82 picked up along the route after the conclusion of the parades by our solid waste cleanup crews.

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85 **Funding Source for Services**

86 Since the inception of the Authority in 2004, our approved budget has included funds from the
87 Tourism Revolving Fund to pay for our manpower and materials costs related to the three
88 annual celebrations. In the past years, this allotment has been \$300,000 for the territory. The
89 St. Thomas Carnival has historically been the highest cost of the three celebrations typically
90 costing \$80,000 per year which includes in-house labor cost, contractor cost and supplies cost.
91 This higher cost is generally attributed to the necessity for more contract crews needed to
92 provide timely cleanup. The St. Croix Carnival utilizes approximately \$40,000 per year and the
93 St. John Celebration utilizes approximately \$60,000 per year.

94

95 I will note for the record that as of my writing of this testimony, the Authority has not received
96 its FY 2015 allotment from the Tourism Revolving Fund. Although, the appropriation level
97 received from the Tourism Revolving Fund continues to be \$300,000 annually, we have not
98 historically expended the full appropriation due to delays in receiving the allotments. The costs
99 incurred during the first celebration of this fiscal year, the St. Croix Carnival, have been paid
100 from the available fund balance. The upcoming anticipated costs for the St. Thomas Carnival
101 will also be paid from the prior year allotment received from the Tourism Revolving Fund. Due
102 to cash flow challenges created as a result of the General Fund appropriation and allotment
103 reductions from FY 2010 to present and the increase in the General Fund expenditures for
104 critical solid waste functions, i.e., landfill closure costs, presently, the Authority will fund
105 carnival clean-up activities on a limited basis. Based on current fiscal trends, the Authority has
106 proposed the collecting a reasonable fee from booth owners, troupes, and other event
107 establishments during their annual registration process to help fund our event specific services
108 described above. This concept is supported by our enabling legislation to institute fees for the
109 Authority's rendered services.

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111 I conclude my testimony by stating that our solid waste and environmental enforcement
112 services are very important to the overall quality of each annual celebration of the territory.

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113 Removal of solid waste and the enforcement of the laws and regulations during the events
114 contributes a very important function in the overall team effort led by the Carnival &
115 Celebration Committees to maintain a safe, clean, and fun atmosphere & experience for our
116 residents and visitors alike. Our territorial staff and contract partners continue to perform an
117 exceptional job every year which is commendable particularly in our current fiscal environment.
118 As of this writing, the Waste Management Authority team stands ready to provide the noted
119 services this year for the upcoming St. Thomas Carnival celebration. We remain available to
120 answer your questions at this time.

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122 END