



United Confederation of Taíno People

• Borikén (Puerto Rico) • Kiskeia (Dominican Republic) • Barbados
• Bimini (United States) • St. Thomas • Kuba

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To: Legislature of the Virgin Islands,
Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth & Recreation

3/08/2016

Re: Hearing on Bill No. 31-0303

Taigueti (Greetings) honorable Committee Members:

The United Confederation of Taíno People (UCTP) promotes the self-determination of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples and the recognition and protection of their human rights, culture, traditions, and sacred lands; as well as serves as a forum for educational advocacy and policy development to affirm and safeguard indigenous Taíno and other Caribbean cultural heritage and spiritual traditions (including burial issues); and promote spiritual, cultural, educational, health, economic, and social development in the Caribbean and the Diaspora.

With this in mind, the UCTP welcomes the discussion and serious consideration of Bill No. 31-0303, an Act providing for the recognition of and respect for the sacred national patrimony and the rights of the Taino, Carib, and other Caribbean Indigenous Peoples as the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the Virgin Islands and that their descendants still exist today. In addition, we welcome the Act's designation of Salt River Bay and Magens Bay as "Amerindian Sacred Places."

This Act represents a positive indication that the Virgin Islands community is committed to protecting the rights of the Taino, Carib, and other Caribbean Indigenous Peoples along with the rights of all Virgin Islanders. Further, the Act is consistent with the spirit and intent of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognizes, among others, that Indigenous Peoples have the right to cultural identity and while they are equal to all other peoples, they also have the right to be different and culturally distinct. This Declaration was adopted in 2007 and currently enjoys wide-support among Nation States around the world, including the United States.

In closing, the UCTP respectfully calls upon the Committee to recommend passage of Bill No. 31-0303 and we pledge our assistance in seeking just and fair ways to implement its provisions in the spirit of its intent.

Oma bahari, nabori daka (With respect, I am at your service),

R. Múkaro Agüeibaná Borrero

R. Múkaro Agüeibaná Borrero,
President, United Confederation of Taino People