



GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, PARKS AND RECREATION



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THE COMMISSIONER

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Calvert White's Testimony

Good afternoon! Honorable Senator Myron Jackson, Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth and Recreation, Members of the Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen of the listening and viewing audience. I am Calvert A. White, Assistant Commissioner for the Department of Sport Parks and Recreation. During the past several months, the Department has taken several steps to enhance the overall experience at Coki beach for visitors and local residents. This initiative was a shared collaboration among various government agencies; however, the Department of Sport Parks, and Recreation specifically addressed the following issues:

- A focal issue at Coki Point Beach was the need for maintenance and the general up keep of the restroom facilities. Painting of the restrooms was done to address its cosmetic appearance.
- A custodian worker was hired on a permanent basis to appropriately care for the cleanliness of restroom facilities.
- In reference to the overflow of trash receptacles, the sanitation crew has been instructed to pick-ups the trash once in the morning and once in the afternoon for a total of twice per day to reduce the amount of trash left at the facility.
- Accordingly, in keeping with sound business practices, Coki Point vendors on the Government side were inspected for valid business licenses. Vendors whose licenses were expired received a 30-day grace period to be compliant and provide a current license.
- Security measures are conducted with the assistance of video camera surveillance. The camera system provides views of all locations to include the beach, vendor's parking lot, driveway entry point and the Sport Parks and Recreation office. In the event, an active investigation becomes necessary the footage is available for authorized parties.
- Since safety continues to be an issue of utmost importance, especially for guests to our shores, a favourable request to the heightened presence of police has been granted. Police presence not only promotes order with respect to traffic, but also becomes a major preventative measure to theft and other forms of illegal activity.

Historically, the department received complaints of Tourists being verbally harassed by taxi drivers trying to get a fare and the traffic congestion. These issues were partially attributed to the lack of regulatory measures in place for taxi cabs at the beach. After careful consideration, it was determined that it is in the best interest of the department to seek alternative ways to control means in which

transportation is regulated at Coki Point Beach. A meeting with Mr. Levron Sarauw, Director of the Taxi Cab Commission, culminated in the idea of sending out a taxi stand concession bid to varying Taxi Cab Associations. Therefore, I am pleased to report that seven months ago a taxi stand concession was put in place and it has cut down tremendously on the numerous complaints of harassment and improved traffic conditions.

While the Department of Sport Parks and Recreation have addressed a number of the reported issues at Coki Beach, there remains another key issue. Coki Point Beach is currently attended by a single lifeguard and needless to say this is a safety concern due to number of people occupying the beach and its facilities on a given day. As a result, Commissioner Cruz has included in the 2017 budget, four (4) new lifeguard positions in response to this safety issue. As I end my testimony, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to inform you of the Department's progress and I will gladly entertain any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully,

Calvert A. White

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