

The Honorable  
Janette Millin Young  
Vice President



## 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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**Chairperson**  
Committee on Economic  
Development, Agriculture and  
Planning

**Vice Chairperson**  
Committee on Rules and Judiciary

**Member**  
Committee on Government Services  
Consumer and Veterans Affairs

**Member**  
Committee on Energy and  
Environmental Protection

**To:** The Hon. Iver Stridiron, Esq.  
Executive Director

**From:** The Hon. Janette Millin Young  
Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture

**Date:** Friday, March 6, 2015

**Subject:** Committee Report for the Hearing of March 5, 2015

Please find transmitted herewith the following report summarizing the proceedings of the March 5, 2015 meeting of the Committee on Economic, Development, Agriculture and Planning.

**Time:** 2:00 p.m.  
**Venue:** Earl B. Ottley Legislative Chambers, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

The committee considered two measures. The first item on the agenda was Bill No. 31-0009, an act repealing and reenacting with amendments title 29 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 12 subchapter III relating to sustainable tourism through art-based revenue stream production. The sponsor of the bill, Senator Clifford Graham, offered amendment No. 31-260 in the nature of a substitute to Bill No. 31-0009 which was vetted on February 23, 2015. He said he offered the amendment due to concerns raised by Mr. Percival Clouden, Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Authority along with Attorney David Bornn, of the Bornn Firm P.L.L.C., and Mr. Laurent Alfred President of I Grade Records. Mr. Alfred testified that the amended legislation, even with the amendments, kept the film industry as a standalone industry and did not include the music industry. Senator Graham agreed that further amendments would be added to include the music industry. Senator Clifford Graham, Senator Almando Liburd and I pledged our support to add amendments to include the music industry. The measure was passed unanimously and forwarded to the Rules Committee for further vetting.

<i>Committee Members</i>	<i>Yea</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Senator Novelle Francis (Vice Chair)	1		
Senator Clifford Graham	2		
Senator Myron Jackson	3		
Senator Neville James	4		
Senator Almando "Rocky" Liburd	5		

March 5, 2015

## Economic Development, Agriculture and Planning Committee Hearing

Senator Nereida Rivera O'Reilly	6		
Senator Tregenza A. Roach	7		
Senator Kurt Vialet	8		
Senator Janette Millin Young(Chair)	9		
<b>Total</b>	9		

The second item on the agenda was Bill No. 31-0022 an act amending title 32 Virgin Islands Code providing for the regulation of business promoters. This controversial measure, sponsored by Senator Myron Jackson, has been before the Legislature and is now before the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature. The proposed measure seeks to ban street solicitations on behalf of businesses. Proponents of the measure to ban these types of solicitations, also referred to as "barking," contend that this type of practice to solicit customers is hurting our tourism product. St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce President Sebastiano Paiewonsky Cassinelli testified that verbal harassment of tourists is a routine occurrence and it's not uncommon to hear barkers call people names or humiliate them if they choose not to listen to their pitch. Mrs. Trudi Prior, chairwoman of the Virgin Islands Hotel Association stated that at least one of the barkers has been known to hold up a fake red and white badge claiming to be from the Department of Tourism. She also stated that the practice has had a negative effect on her business at Coral World in the area of Coki Point Beach. Many other testimonies were shared pointing to why barking should be banned as a practice in St. Thomas, including testimony from the Territorial Board of Realtors.

Testifying against the ban was Mr. Bradley Sisneros who said that a complete ban would end his business. Also testifying against the ban was Mr. Charles Matthews who owns a business in downtown. Taxi driver Mr. Pascal Simeon, who testified against the ban as well, stated that this law would also negatively impact his business even though he does not believe he is considered a barker. He said he encourages tourists to go downtown to do their shopping and then suggests that they take an island tour. After hours of testimony and a brief recess by the committee the committee members unanimously voted to hold the bill pending further amendments.

<i>Committee Members</i>	<i>Yea</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Senator Novell Francis (Vice Chair)	1		
Senator Clifford Graham	2		
Senator Myron Jackson	3		
Senator Neville James	4		
Senator Almando "Rocky" Liburd	5		
Senator Nereida Rivera O'Reilly	6		
Senator Tregenza Roach	7		
Senator Kurt Vialet	8		
Senator Janette Millin Young (Chair)	9		
<b>Total</b>	9		

March 5, 2015

Economic Development, Agriculture and Planning Committee Hearing

Staff Present:

Ivan Williams, Office of Senator Millin Young  
Kishma Corum, Office of Senator Millin Young  
Albion Lambertis, Sergeant at Arms  
Nataya Munoz, Legislative Reporter  
Tricia Sealey, Legislative Reporter  
Saida Harrigan, Public Affairs  
Africah Harrigan, Public Affairs  
Athneil Thomas, Public Affairs  
Barry Leerdam, Public Affairs  
Reginald Martin, Public Affairs  
Ronald Simon, Public Affairs

All members of the committee were present:

Non-Committee Members Present:

Honorable Justin Harrigan  
Honorable Marvin Blyden

At 8:05 pm Senator Millin Young thanked her committee members, her staff and the staff of the legislature for their continued support and the meeting was adjourned.

Cc: All Senators  
Legal Counsel  
Archives Division  
Journal Division