



Government of the Virgin Islands
of the United States

Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs

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Honorable Janet Millin-Young
Senator
31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Veteran's Drive
St. Thomas, VI 00802

February 23, 2015

Dear Senator Millin-Young:

The Department hereby expresses its support for 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. This legislation, if passed into law, will create vitally needed revenue streams for the Virgin Islands with the revitalization and expansion of the motion picture and television industries and the growth of other small businesses related to these industries.

The proposed also legislation makes provision for the creation of a tax incentives office within the Virgin Islands Economic Development Commission. This office will involve a collaboration of the Film Office of the Department of Tourism and the Virgin Islands Economic Development Commission and will be responsible for managing applications for tax incentives under the program.

In order to qualify and remain eligible for the tax incentive benefits under the proposed legislation, an entity must be licensed by the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs. The proposed legislation mandates that the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs process a business license application for a production company applicant within fifteen (15) days of submission of said application. If a determination as to the propriety of the issuance of a business license is not made within fifteen (15) days, the Department shall issue a temporary license to the applicant entitling the applicant to commence business at the expiration of the fifteen (15) working days period. This permit will be valid for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days.

The Department boasts a one stop online licensing program capable of processing a complete application within fifteen (15) business days. All agencies involved in the licensing process are an integral part of the system. All that is needed from the Internal Revenue Bureau, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the Fire Department and the Virgin Islands

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Police Department is an online approval for a business license to be issued. This has been the case for the last five years and so we are proud to announce that the Department will be able to process a license for any applicant within the fifteen (15) day period mandated by the proposed legislation except that we would respectfully suggest that the legislation be amended to state 15 business days. In fact all references to processing or issuing a license should be amended to reflect *business* days.

Similarly, the Department has a start-up licensing system in place. Prior to the introduction of the online licensing system, the Department was incapable of issuing a business license within fifteen days. All agencies within the licensing system had to issue manual approval. This was quite cumbersome and time consuming and prevented many business applicants from acquiring the business capital needed for the launching of their businesses. To enable applicants to obtain the necessary funding from the banks, the Department introduced a start-up licensing system. This start-up business license was valid for a period of sixty (60) days.

The Department is therefore proud to announce that it is fully equipped to carry out the mandates of the proposed legislation if passed into law. In fact, we eagerly look forward to performing our role in the revitalization and expansion of the motion picture and television industries in the Virgin Islands. We are confident that this industry will provide our citizens with well needed jobs and exposure, and provides us with vital sources of revenue and business activities that will help to put us on the road to economic recovery. Again, we are in full support of the proposed legislation.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to comment on Bill No. 30-0417.

Respectfully,

Devin Carrington, Esq.
Commissioner