



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**TESTIMONY**

**Dawn L. Henry, Esq., Commissioner Nominee**  
Department of Planning and Natural Resources

Committee on Economic Development, Agriculture and Planning  
**Senator Janet Millin Young, Chairman**

Bill No. 31-0100, an Act amending Title 7 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 1, to allow for the cultivation of Hemp and other related purposes.

Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall  
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas

June 4, 2015

Good Morning to the Honorable Janet Millin Young, Chairman of the Committee of Economic Development, Agriculture and Planning, to the 31st Legislature of the Virgin Islands, to other members of the committee, other senators present, and the listening and viewing public.

My name is Dawn Henry and I am the Commissioner Nominee of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and I have with me Howard Forbes, Acting Director for the Division of Environmental Enforcement.

Thank you for your letter of invitation dated May 15<sup>th</sup> requesting the participation of the Department of Planning & Natural Resources in your committee meeting to discuss Bill No. 31-0100, an act amending Title 7 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1, to allow for the cultivation of Hemp and other related purposes.

After reading through this bill, the department has only a few concerns. The Department of Planning and Natural Resources - Division of Fish and Wildlife is responsible for the protection of both native plants and wildlife and federally protected plants. Division of Fish and Wildlife understands that hemp is a plant that is capable of growing under most conditions, except cold weather. This not only allows for hemp to grow easily in the territory – which is a considered a positive, but it also has the potential for spreading to areas where not intended. Division of Fish and Wildlife suggests that farmers be required to have a “control method plan” to prevent unwanted spreading. DPNR-Division of Fish and Wildlife stands available in assisting with the reviewing of any such plan.

Section 21 (f) of the Bill calls for a farming license. The Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning participates in the licensing process by reviewing application for zoning sufficiency. CCZP will continue to assist the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs with the licensing process. CCZP acknowledges the District of St. Croix has more available agriculture-zoned land than in the St. Thomas/St. John district.

As far as enforcement, the division of Environmental Enforcement as the enforcement arm of the department will continue to enforce the Territories environmental and zoning laws.

Finally, with respect to page 10, line 1 and 2 of the Bill, the department respectfully requests that the Commissioner be allowed to appoint a designee to sit on the Virgin Islands Industrial Hemp Commission.

Once again Senators, thank you for the invitation, we are here to participate in the discussion in any way that it may pertain to the regulatory functions of DPNR.