

**Testimony on Bill No. 31-0076**

**Joseph B. Boschulte  
President & CEO  
The West Indian Company, Ltd**

**Testimony on Bill No. 31-0076**

**Joseph B. Boschulte  
President & CEO  
The West Indian Company, Ltd.**

**“An Act directing the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority, to promote the island of St. Croix to those visiting St. Thomas and St. John, and for other purposes.”**

THE HONORABLE JANETTE MILLIN-YOUNG, CHAIRPERSON OF THE THIRTY- FIRST LEGISLATURE’S COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE AND PLANNING; COMMITTEE MEMBERS, OTHER SENATORS PRESENT, LEGISLATIVE STAFF, FELLOW TESTIFIERS, VIEWERS, LISTENERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT THIS MORNING.

GOOD MORNING. I AM JOSEPH B. BOSCHULTE, PRESIDENT AND C-E-O OF THE WEST INDIAN COMPANY, LIMITED.

THANK YOU FOR INVITING WICO TO TESTIFY ON BILL 31-0076 RELATING TO DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, TO PROMOTE THE ISLAND OF ST. CROIX TO ALL THOSE VISITING THE ISLANDS OF ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

AS I MENTIONED DURING MY LAST APPEARANCE BEFORE THIS BODY, WICO’S MANDATE IS THE GRANTING OF SAFE ACCOMMODATIONS TO CRUISE SHIPS OF EVER INCREASING SIZE AND CAPACITY ALONG WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE HISTORIC DOCK AND ITS AFFILIATED PROPERTIES. WE TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR ROLE AS THE LEAD ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCOMMODATION OF CRUISE PASSENGERS IN THE TERRITORY.

Joseph B. Boschulte  
31<sup>ST</sup> Legislature's Committee on Economic Development,  
Agriculture and Planning  
Testimony/Bill No. 31-0076  
June 4, 2015

LET ME STATE UNEQUIVOCABLY MY COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING ALLTOURISM FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ENTIRE TERRITORY, WHETHER CRUISE, YACHT OR OVERNIGHT VISITORS. WHETHER ON ST. THOMAS, ST. JOHN OR ST. CROIX.

WHILE MY PRIMARY DUTY AS PRESIDENT AND C-E-O OF WICO IS MAKING SURE THE COMPANY FULFILLS ALL RESPONSIBILITIES ENTRUSTED TO US BY THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CODE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, AT THE END OF THE DAY I AM A VIRGIN ISLANDER WHO SEES THE BIG PICTURE.

AS AN EXECUTIVE IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY IN ONE OF THE MOST DESIREABLE AND HIGHLY-TRAVELED REGIONS IN THE WORLD, I REALIZE GETTING THIS RIGHT IS CRUCIAL TO OUR TERRITORIAL BOTTOM LINE. WHAT EACH ENTITY DOES IN COLLABORATION AND CO-OPERATION WITH EACH OTHER MUST ENHANCE THE OVERALL TOURISM PRODUCT IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS. AS SUCH, WE OPERATE WITH THE FULL BELIEF THAT ALL GUESTS TO ALL THREE ISLANDS ARE IMPORTANT – CRUISE AS WELL AS AIR.

I OPERATE WITH THE FULL KNOWLEDGE AND CLEAR VISION THAT ACTIONS WE TAKE IN THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY AFFECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL RESIDENTS, WHETHER THEY ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN TOURISM, OR BENEFIT AS A RESULT OF INCREASES TO THE OVERALL ECONOMY.

**WE AT WICO ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORT THE PROMOTION OF OUR SISTER ISLAND OF ST. CROIX.**

AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE AT WICO ARE AHEAD OF THE GAME. ON-SITE PROMOTION OF ST. CROIX IS AN INITIATIVE WICO HAS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN. SINCE 2014 WE HAVE HAD THREE ST. CROIX PROMOTIONAL SIGNS IN PROMINENT LOCATIONS ON OUR PROPERTY

Joseph B. Boschulte  
31<sup>st</sup> Legislature's Committee on Economic Development,  
Agriculture and Planning  
Testimony/Bill No. 31-0076  
June 4, 2015

PLEASE SEE A COPY OF THE ATTACHED RENDERINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SIGNAGE CURRENTLY IN PLACE IN HIGH-TRAFFIC AREAS ON THE WICO DOCK.

THESE SIGNS ARE PERMANENT FIXTURES ON OUR PROPERTY. WHILE THE CREATIVE MESSAGE AND IMAGES MAY CHANGE OVER TIME, THE FOCUS WILL ALWAYS BE ABOUT PROMOTING ST. CROIX.

WE ARE CURRENTLY IN THE FINAL PLANNING AND PRE-EXECUTION STAGE OF A BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING SESSION – AIMED AT INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES INTERESTED IN EXPANDING OR STARTING A BUSINESS WITH THE CRUISE LINES AS WELL AS WITHIN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

THIS TWO-DAY TRAINING, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKING SESSION WILL BE HELD ON ST. THOMAS - AND WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THAT WE ARE ALSO EXTENDING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ENTREPRENEURS ON ST. CROIX. PLEASE VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE (THE WEST INDIAN COMPANY LIMITED) OR CONTACT US AT [PUBLICRELATIONS@WICO-LTD.COM](mailto:PUBLICRELATIONS@WICO-LTD.COM) FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WE ARE OFTEN ASKED ABOUT PROMOTING ST. CROIX IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE CRUISE LINES.

ST. CROIX – SPECIFICALLY THE ANN ABRAMSON PIER – IS UNDER THE OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS PORT AUTHORITY. AS SUCH, WE DO NOT NEGOTIATE ON THEIR BEHALF. AS THE PORT AUTHORITY DOES NOT NEGOTIATE ON OURS.

HOWEVER, AS I TESTIFIED IN SEPTEMBER DURING THE 2014 BUDGET REVIEW, IT IS WICO'S NORMAL PRACTICE TO RECOMMEND ST. CROIX AS A PORT OF CALL IN AN EFFORT TO HEIGHTEN CRUISE LINE AND VISITOR AWARENESS OF ST. CROIX.

ALSO, WHEN WICO IS UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE SHIPS AT THE WICO DOCK OR VIPA IS UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THEM IN THE OUTER HARBOR, WE ENCOURAGE CRUISE LINES TO CONSIDER ST. CROIX – REFERRING THEM, OF COURSE, TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS PORT AUTHORITY FOR BERTHING INFORMATION AND SPACE AVAILABILITY.

I WILL ADMIT BEERTHING AND SCHEDULING NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE VERY CHALLENGING. WICO REMAINS KEENLY AWARE AT ALL TIMES OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AS TOP-TIER DESTINATION AND THE RELEVANT PLAYER IN THE CARRIBEAN CRUISE INDUSTRY IN SPITE OF OUR LIMITED MEGA-SHIP BERTHING OPTIONS AND INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE COMPETITION FROM OTHER ISLANDS.

WITH BIGGER SHIPS COMING AND LIMITED MEGA-SHIP BERTHING AVAILABILITY, UNLESS WE MAKE A SERIOUS MOVE TO INCREASE OUR PREMIUM BERTHING CAPACITY, WE MUST FACE THE HARSH REALITY THAT WE WILL LOSE OUR CACHET AS ONE OF THE LEADING DESTINATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN. AND LET ME BE CLEAR – ALL INDUSTRY STATISTICS POINT TO THE CLEAR DOMINANCE OF THE REGION.

OUR AGGRESSIVE TERRITORIAL MARKETING AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS ARE SO SUCCESSFUL THAT VISITOR AND CRUISE LINE DEMAND HAS OUTPACED OUR BERTHING CAPACITY. SCALING BACK ON ADVERTISING IS NOT AN OPTION UNLESS WE DECIDE THAT WE WANT TO SCALE BACK ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

METAPHORICALLY, I COULD SAY THAT OUR CHICKENS HAVE COME HOME TO ROOST, BUT WITH OUR LIMITED MEGA-SHIP BERTHING SPACE, IT WOULD BE MORE ACCURATE TO SAY THAT OUR CHICKENS HAVE NO PLACE TO ROOST, SO THEY WILL BE ROOSTING ELSEWHERE.

Joseph B. Boschulte  
31<sup>st</sup> Legislature's Committee on Economic Development,  
Agriculture and Planning  
Testimony/Bill No. 31-0076  
June 4, 2015

AS A LEADER IN THE TERRITORY'S CRUISE AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES, WE AT WICO SEE OUR ROLE AS FAR MORE THAN PROVIDING A SAFE AND STUNNING BERTH FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND FINEST CRUISE SHIPS TO SAFELY AND ROUTINELY DOCK. WE TAKE THIS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY – BUT WE ARE CRITICALLY AWARE THAT THIS IS BUT ONE PART OF A LARGER AND MORE COMPLEX PUZZLE.

AT DAY'S END, ALL ASPECTS OF OUR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY SERVE TWO SIMPLE TRUTHS: TO PROVIDE AN EXEMPLARY AND SAFE GUEST EXPERIENCE WHILE PROVIDING CRITICAL FUEL IN THE ECONOMIC ENGINE WHICH DRIVES OUR TERRITORY.

EVEN MORE SIMPLY PUT – WE WANT OUR GUESTS TO HAVE A GOOD, SAFE TIME AND WE WANT OUR RESIDENTS TO BE ABLE TO THRIVE AND PROVIDE WELL FOR THEIR FAMILIES.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE ENGAGED THE PUBLIC IN A SERIES OF WIDELY PUBLISHED AND DISCUSSED OP-EDS WHERE WE SHARE OUR INSIGHT AND EXPERIENCES RELATED TO THE CRUISE INDUSTRY IN PARTICULAR AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

WE ARE EAGER TO CONTINUE TO SHARE OUR INSIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE SO WE CAN HOLD ON TO AND GROW OUR MARKET SHARE IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE. WE HAVE SHARED MICRO AND MACRO INDUSTRY TRENDS AS OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE REJUVENATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF OUR DESTINATION. AND AS TRAVELERS BECOME MORE DISCERNING AND DISCRIMINATING, WE DEFINITELY SEE A PLACE FOR ST. CROIX IN THE MULTI-ISLAND DESTINATION THAT IS THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS.

Joseph B. Boschulte  
31<sup>ST</sup> Legislature's Committee on Economic Development,  
Agriculture and Planning  
Testimony/Bill No. 31-0076  
June 4, 2015

THE 2012-2013 BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARC VISITOR EXIT SURVEY REVEALS THREE VERY INTERESTING STATISTICS WHICH WE AT WICO BELIEVE BODE WELL FOR ST. CROIX AS A DESTINATION.

FIFTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF ALL CRUISE GUESTS WHO CAME TO THE TERRITORY DURING THE PERIOD WERE REPEAT VISITORS TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

FORTY-EIGHT AND FIFTY-TWO PERCENT RESPECTIVELY STATED THAT THEY WOULD RETURN FOR ANOTHER VISIT OR RECOMMEND THE DESTINATION TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

WE BELIEVE THAT THESE HIGHTLY SATISFIED GUESTS WOULD ENJOY SAMPLING ALL THREE ISLANDS ON ONE OR MORE OF THEIR RETURN VISITS. AND ST. CROIX - WITH A CHARACTER AND CHARM DIFFERENT FROM ST. THOMAS OR ST. JOHN - IS A FINE PLACE TO SAMPLE AND EXPLORE.

WE AT WICO ARE VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CRUISE SHIP VISITS TO THE OVERALL TOURISM PRODUCT. AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, OUR MAY OP-ED PUBLISHED IN LOCAL ON-LINE AND PRINT MEDIA UNDERSCORED THE IMPACT OF CRUISE VISITORS ON THE OVERNIGHT GUEST SEGMENT OF OUR TOURISM PRODUCT.

TO RECAP, THERE IS A CLEAR SYNERGY AND SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CRUISE INDUSTRY AND THE HOTEL, VILLA AND TIME SHARE INDUSTRIES.

ACCORDING TO THE PREVIOUSLY CITED V-I-B-E-R SURVEY, TWENTY-TWO PERCENT OF AIR VISITORS TO THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS WERE RETURNING CRUISE PASSENGERS.

Joseph B. Boschulte  
31<sup>ST</sup> Legislature's Committee on Economic Development,  
Agriculture and Planning  
Testimony/Bill No. 31-0076  
June 4, 2015

**GIVEN THESE STATISTICS, IF A 3,000 PASSENGER CRUISE SHIP VISITS, 660 OF THOSE CRUISE GUESTS WILL LIKELY TO RETURN AS AN OVERNIGHT GUESTS.**

**WITH AN AVERAGE OVERNIGHT STAY OF 7.7 DAYS AND AVERAGE SPENDING AT \$266 PER DAY, THOSE CONVERTED CRUISE PASSENGERS WILL CONTRIBUTE APPROXIMATELY \$1.4 MILLION TO THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS ECONOMY.**

**CRUISE GUESTS SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR VALUE AS GATEWAY GUESTS: GUESTS INTRODUCED TO THE ISLANDS DURING A BRIEF VISIT, WHO ARE WILLING TO MAKE A CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT TO RETURN TO A HIGH-END DESTINATION SUCH AS THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS FOR A LONGER AND FULLER OVERNIGHT EXPERIENCE.**

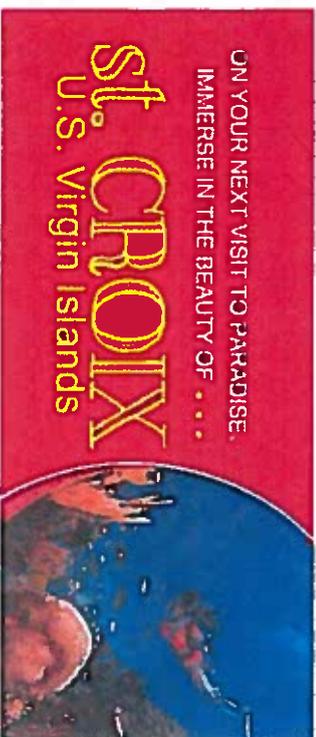
**THESE RETURN VISITORS SHOULD CONSIDER AND VISIT ST. CROIX.**

**THIS IS THE BOTTOM LINE: THE MORE CRUISE SHIPS THAT VISIT ANY ISLAND, THE GREATER THE LIKELIHOOD OF ALL ISLANDS SEEING MORE OVERNIGHT VISITORS. EXPONENTIALLY, THERE IS A RISING TIDE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH THAT BECOMES SUSTAINABLE FOR THE ENTIRE TERRITORY.**

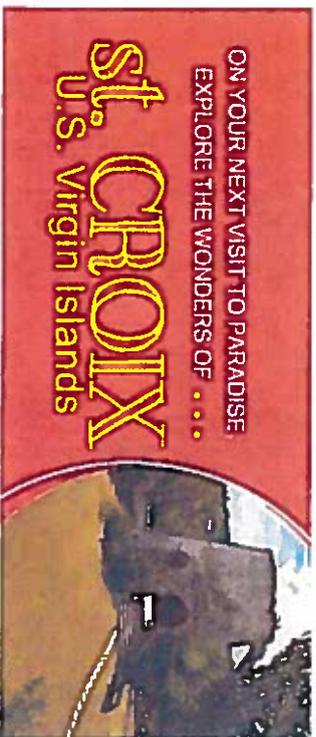
**OVERALL, WICO ENCOURAGES AND APPLAUDS THE INTENT OF THIS BILL – INCREASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND ENHANCEMENT FOR ST. CROIX AND THE TERRITORY IN GENERAL.**

# THE WEST INDIAN COMPANY, LTD. ST. CROIX PROMOTIONAL DOCK SIGNAGE

Immerse



Explore



Party

