

Testimony of  
Donnie E. Dorsett  
Bureau of Economic Research  
Bill No. 31-0387  
“An Act amending VIC, title 3,  
chapter 33, pertaining to expedited  
government services”  
Before the  
Legislative Committee on Government Services, Consumer and Veterans  
Affairs  
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Good Day Honorable Chairman, Senator Justin Harrigan, Sr. and members of the Committee on Government Services, Consumer and Veterans Affairs, testifiers, listening and viewing audience. My name is Donnie E. Dorsett the Bureau of Economic Research (BER) Senior Policy Analyst. The Bureau of Economic Research was asked by this committee to give testimony on Bill No. 31-0387-“an Act amending Virgin Islands Code, title 3, chapter 33 pertaining to expedited government services.” My testimony will focus on defining an expedited fee, provide an example of expedited fee, and comment on the given timeframe of the fast-track service.

Expedited fees are charges added to accelerate or rush a given service, the service is then fast-track and provided at a shorter period than if the same service was provided without such a charge. The usage of expedited fees allows for individuals and businesses to complete their affairs in a timely manner. Both public and private sector service institutions provide an expedited fee. The behavioral pattern of service consumers dictates persons are willing to incur the additional cost once the accelerated service is guaranteed.

The bill allows for central and semi-autonomous government entities, to offer an expedited fee to services for an additional cost equal to  $1 \frac{1}{3}$  or 1.33 percent. There are already government agencies that provide expedited fee services to customers, for instance, the Lieutenant Governor’s, Division of Corporations and Trademarks offers an expedited fee of 24 hours to obtain a trade name certificate. The cost of this accelerated fee is \$250.00. The regular process fee is \$25.00. The expedited fee represents a 900 percent increase in the regular process fee.

Following the 1.33 percent methodology, the \$25.00 with additional 1.33 percent fee would become \$33.25.

The bill calls for “the department agency, bureau, or instrumentality to provide services” within six working days. However, if the services cannot be delivered within the six working days the services provided become free of charge, and any advanced fee will be refunded to the customer. If the bill passes in its current form, government entities must be evaluated on a case by case basis, to determine if the given time period of six working days and the 1.33 percent is reasonable. The agencies must assure the accelerated service can be guaranteed, or risk losing the fees paid to the government.

Another matter associated to the six days guaranteed period, is a few of the local public services provided are interrelated between existing agencies. For example a first time customer who wishes to obtain a U.S. Virgin Islands business license from the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, has to obtain approval from the Departments of Police, Planning and Natural Resources, Internal Revenue Bureau, and in some cases the Department of Fire. Another example is the Lieutenant Governor’s, Passport Division. The agency transmits its U.S. Passport applications to a facility located on the U.S. mainland. In turn, the local Passport Office awaits the return of U.S. Passports from the mainland facility. Thus, each agency will need to be efficient in the turnaround time to meet the six days requirement.

This concludes my presentation and the Bureau thanks the Committee on Government Services, Consumer and Veterans Affairs for the opportunity to provide testimony Bill No. 31-0387.