

Testimony of
Vincent Richards
Assistant Commissioner of Property & Printing
Department of Property and Procurement
On Behalf of
Lisa M. Alejandro
Commissioner of the Department of Property & Procurement

On

*Lease Agreement by and between the Department of Property and Procurement on behalf of the
Government of the Virgin Islands and The United States Department of Commerce, National
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

Before

Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Earle B. Ottley Legislative Chambers
ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Good morning, Committee Chairman Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Vice-Chair Marvin E. Blyden, Committee members – Honorable Senators, Kurt A. Vialet, Dwayne M. DeGraff, Ray Fonseca, Hubert L. Frederick, and Marise C. James, Non-Committee members, Central and Legislative Staff, fellow testifiers, visitors present in the chambers, and members of the viewing and listening audience.

I am Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement (“DPP”). I am testifying today on behalf of the Commissioner, Lisa M. Alejandro, to offer testimony on the proposed Lease Agreement before this Committee for consideration. Today, DPP requests this Committee’s, and ultimately the full Senate’s approval of the proposed Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands (“GVI”) and The United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (hereinafter “NOAA”).

The Lease Agreement requires legislative approval in accordance with 31 V.I.C. § 205 (c). The term commences on the first (1st) day of the month following the approval of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands. The U.S. Government agrees to promptly consider and adjudicate any claims which may arise out of the use of the Premises by the U.S. Government, duly authorized representatives, or contractors of the U.S. Government, and pay for any damage or injury as may be required by applicable law.

I. Bill No. 36-0062 (NOAA)

The Lease Agreement between the GVI and NOAA is for: ***a portion of the Telecommunications Tower located on Parcel R-22 of Tract 1 Estate Nazareth, No. 1 Redhook Quarter, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, with the geographic coordinates of Latitude 18 19 42.5, Longitude 64 51 33 (hereafter “Premises”).***

The term of this Lease Agreement is for twenty (20) years.

The Annual Rent of **One Thousand Two Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$1,200.00)** is payable at the rate of **One Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$100.00)**, per month in arrears, without demand; therefore, NOAA covenants and agrees to pay said rent as aforesaid (subject to the availability of funds). If the term of the Lease Agreement includes any partial month, rent for the partial month shall be prorated. NOAA shall use the Premises for the purpose of the transmission and reception of weather broadcast communications and emergency broadcast communications.

As the Lessee, NOAA is responsible for obtaining and maintaining the required permits, licenses, and any required rezoning to a zoning designation compatible to the operation of same on the Premises. For the purposes of this Lease Agreement, the U.S. Government is self-insured, therefore no insurance was provided or is required.

The proposed Lease Agreement will assist NOAA and the GVI in collecting atmospheric data within the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Districts. Providing Virgin Islanders with an optimum weather broadcast and emergency broadcast system, keeping them informed and prepared for the ever-ending environmental changes affecting the area.

DPP and Commissioner Alejandro respectfully requests that the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance vote in favor of the proposed Lease Agreement.

This concludes my Testimony, and I am prepared to answer any questions the Committee may have regarding the proposed Lease Agreement. Thank You.