

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

On

Bill No. 36-0257
*transferring a portion of Parcel No. 2C Estate Ross, 8 New Quarter, St Thomas, U.S Virgin
Islands, from the Virgin Islands Housing Authority to the Virgin Islands Department of
Education for use by the Charlotte Amalie High School*

Before

Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance

April 21, 2026

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

Good Morning, Committee Chair Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Vice-Chair Marvin A. Blyden, Committee members – Honorable Senators, Kurt A. Vialet, Dwayne M. DeGraff, Ray A. 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 Property & Printing Division for the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement (DPP). I appear before you today on behalf of Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro to present testimony in support of Bill No. 36-0257, which authorizes the transfer of a portion of Parcel No. 2C Estate Ross, No. 8 New Quarter, St. Thomas, from the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority to the Government of the Virgin Islands. Upon transfer, the property will be assigned to the Virgin Islands Department of Education to support the operations and ongoing modernization and expansion of Charlotte Amalie High School.

By way of background, the subject property was part of a series of lands transferred under Act No. 6973, enacted in 2007, which authorized the transfer of certain real property from the Government of the Virgin Islands, which were used by the then Virgin Islands Department of Housing, Parks and Recreation for housing related purposes, to the Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority for financing and affordable housing development purposes. That legislation enabled the Authority to lease, develop, or otherwise leverage such properties.

A portion of the parcel has historically been, and continues to be, utilized by Charlotte Amalie High School. There are two single-story masonry structures on the subject property measuring approximately 850 square feet and 1,600 square feet, respectively.

The Department of Property and Procurement is charged with ensuring that public properties are strategically aligned with agency mandates and utilized in a manner that maximizes public benefit. This proposed transfer supports the responsible realignment of this Government of the Virgin Islands asset. Assigning this portion of Parcel No. 2C Estate Ross for the use of the Department of Education places the property under the jurisdiction of the agency best suited to advance its intended public purpose.

This action will ensure that the Department of Education, and specifically Charlotte Amalie High School, has access to adequate land resources to support long-term planning efforts, including current expansion, modernization, and infrastructure enhancements that will strengthen the institution's capacity to serve future generations.

This measure reflects sound principles of asset management and underscores the Government's continued commitment to investing in educational infrastructure. Proper alignment and utilization of government-owned property ensure that public resources are preserved and leveraged for the direct benefit of the community.

If approved, this land transfer will enable the Virgin Islands Department of Education to better implement its plans for expansion and operational enhancement at Charlotte Amalie High School. It will also contribute to the continued development of the United States Virgin Islands and support the long-term strengthening of its public education system. For consistency with the Department's responsibilities as the custodian of Government-owned real estate and the provisions in title 3, Virgin Islands Code, section 218(a)(2), and title 31, Virgin Islands Code, section 201(a), the Department recommends that the bill be amended to authorize the transfer of the property to the Government of the Virgin Islands acting through its Department of Property and Procurement for the benefit of the Department of Education, in all material respects. We stand ready to assist with the proposed amendment, if necessary.

Accordingly, on behalf of Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro, I respectfully express full support for the passage of Bill No. 36-0257, with the Department's proposed amendment, and urge the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance, and ultimately the Legislature, to approve this measure.

Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I am prepared to answer any questions you may have regarding the proposed land transfer.