

June 18, 2025

Good evening Honorable Senator Novelle Francis, members of the Finance Committee, other Senators of the 36th Legislature present, all other people present and to those of you viewing and listening.

I am Carmen Wesselhoft-Hedrington an independent Taxi driver here on St. John. Thank you for rescheduling this hearing so that it can be held on St. John since a hearing of this magnitude affects the lives of all taxi drivers on St. John.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on bill number 36-0092, a lease agreement A Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through the Department of Property Procurement and St. John Taxi Services Corporation. To Lease Parcel No. D-2 Estate Cruz Bay Town Quarter, U.S. Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 2700 U.S. sq. ft. or 0.062 U.S. acres of land zoned W- The property will be used to operate a taxi stand and other related services.

I am here before you this evening not on my own behalf, but I am the voice of the fifty plus people whose signature is on the signed petition presented to you.

This signed petition represents the signatures of all who vehemently opposed this body giving a lease to any entity for this public Taxi stand.

The Cruz Bay taxi stand is a public taxi stand, which was made law by former Senator Cleone Creque Maynard back in 1980. Senator Maynard passed this bill so that no St. John taxi operator would be disenfranchised but we are all given an equal opportunity to operate fairly and equally without fear of bullying, personal vendettas, or personality conflicts.

This public Taxi Stand should not be leased out period. In early years, the taxi stand was leased out to St. John Taxi Stand but history has shown that under a lease there has always been chaos. In 2013 under the DeJohn administration St. John Taxi

Service was evicted from the Taxi Stand because of unruly and chaotic conduct. Governor DeJongh said he found it fit to put it under the port authority since they are the manager of the port/ferry dock. For two years it was under the management of the port, and it ran smoothly. Certain measures were put in place by the Port Authority before it was turned back to Property and procurement in 2015. From 2015 to 2024 St. John taxi drivers managed themselves with the measures that were put in place by the Port Authority, and it ran orderly. Therefore, we believe that we do not need any one entity with a lease. What is needed is proper management and for the Taxi Commission to do its part in acting on the complaints of unruly taxi drivers so that we can weed out the ones that are making it chaotic and putting taxi drivers in a bad light.

Recently, the Department of Property and Procurement awarded St. John Taxi Services Corporation a one-year Temporary Revocable License Agreement for Parcel No. D-2 Estate Cruz Bay Town, known as the St. John Taxi Stand. In our observation, and what we are experiencing there is a lot of bias and unethical practices. While this agency does not get into the rules or bylaws of the Association or the day-to-day operation, the agency still has the oversight responsibility and should be aware of what is taking place on its property.

St. John Taxi drivers are always at a disadvantage. Recently the Virgin Islands National Park has disenfranchised us where they initially charged \$75.00 to operate in the park (to drive on the Almando Rocky Liburd Road). This year they increased the fee by 466% to \$350.00. We do not know what it will be next year. Because initially, they wanted \$750.00. Then they are asking for 3% of our gross income. This was delayed until we do not know when.

The Cruz Bay Ferry Terminal is the Gateway to St. John. Unlike St. Thomas, this is the only port of entrance for Taxi operators to work from. St. Thomas you can work at the airport, Crown Bay Terminal, Blyden Terminal, Urman Fredericks Terminal (Red Hook), West Indies Company /Haven sight, Magens Bay, Coki Point, at a hotel and the list goes on.

Nevertheless, the Cruz Bay Taxi stand, or the Virgin Islands National Park are the only two areas of operation for taxi drivers. We are unique and limited.

St. John is too small and limited in choices to operate from to give one group a lease and a lease for twenty-years.

Respectfully Submitted

Taxi Ambassadors of St. John

ST. JOHN
INDEPENDENT TAXI AMBASSADORS

	<u>PRINT NAME</u>	<u>SIGN NAME</u>	<u>PLATE #</u>
1.	Oliver Samuel	Oliver Samuel	67
2.	Derrick Thomas	Derrick Thomas	99
3.	Pia Samuel	Pia Samuel	0016
4.	Olivette Samuel	Olivette Samuel	0038
5.	Cindy Paris	Cindy Paris	0054
6.	Llewellyn Callwood	Llewellyn Callwood	0163
7.	Douglas Matthias	Douglas Matthias	0019
8.	Navelle Barton	Navelle Barton	0011
9.	Lemuel Likud	Lemuel Likud	0041
10.	Edmund ROBERTS	Edmund Roberts	0161
11.	Frank Ripul	Frank Ripul	020
12.	Rawle Rogers	Rawle Rogers	109
13.	Stanley Hedington	Stanley Hedington	0099
14.	Leon E. Santos	Leon E. Santos	0150
15.	Nedra Ephraim	Nedra Ephraim	
16.	EZEKIEL Turnbull	Ezekiel Turnbull	0095
17.	HENRY POWELL	Henry Powell	160
18.	Dora Callwood	Dora Callwood	0008
19.	Titus Joseph	Titus Joseph	0117
20.	Edna L. ABSARIS	Edna L. ABSARIS	0105

ST. JOHN
INDEPENDENT TAXI AMBASSADORS

PRINT NAME

SIGN NAME

PLATE #

(owner)

1. Patrick A. Hendrickson Sr. Patrick A. Hendrickson Taxi-0012
2. HAMILTON EUGENIE Hamilton Eugene TAXI 035
3. DORIS FLEMING Doris 055
4. Charles MARSH Charles Marsh
5. Bernard Wesselhoff Bernard Wesselhoff 0164-0079
6. CAMILLE PARISSE Camille SP-0110
7. Clifton Boyers Clifton Boyers 0136
8. Cecilia Henderson Cecilia Henderson JP-0049
9. Mitchell Samuel Mitchell Samuel JP-0060
10. John Greffith John Greffith JP-0047
11. Owen Hyatt Owen Hyatt SP 0149
12. Kedja Prentice Kedja Prentice SP 148
13. Merv Powell Merv Powell JP 0077
14. David Cooper David Cooper JP 0025
15. Oliver Samuel Oliver Samuel JP 0047
16. Tafari Oliver Tafari Oliver JP 0087
17. Watson Jones Watson Jones
18. Dean G. Thomas Sr. Dean Thomas Sr.
19. Patricia Varlack P. Varlack 0155
20. Joe St. Prix Joe St. Prix 0001

igned twice

PRINT NAME

SIGN NAME

PLATE #

21. Barren Callwood

Barren Callwood

JP 1088
" "

22. LAURIEN CALLWOOD

Laurien Callwood

23. Levi S Liburd

Levi S Liburd

JP. 016

24. Kevin Williams

Kevin Williams

J.P. 0073

25. K.C. Williams

Kenneth Williams

JP 107

26. Andreotti Samuel Williams

Andreotti Samuel Williams

JP. 0060

27. Kirtan Mousa

Kirtan Mousa

JP 0121

28. Dylan Chester

Dylan Chester

JD-0063

29. Phillip Jackson

Phillip Jackson

JP 061

30. LEONARD STEPHEN

Leonard Stephen

JP 0122

31. William FERGUSON

William Ferguson

Taxi-0039

32. JAMES PENN

James Penn

0135

33. _____

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41. _____
