FY 2027 BUDGET TESTIMONY FOR

THE OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Thursday, July 23, 2026

Good Afternoon, Committee Chairperson Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr. and Honorable Members of the 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance, other Senators present today, as well as the viewing and listening audiences.

My name is Nadja D. Harrigan, Esq., Acting Chief of Staff and Legal Counsel for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor ("LGO"), which is under the leadership of the Honorable Tregenza A. Roach, Esq., Lieutenant Governor of the United States Virgin Islands. I most respectfully appear before you today, on behalf of Lieutenant Governor Roach to present testimony in support of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request. In summary, I have included accomplishments for each division within LGO for Fiscal Year 2026 and their goals for Fiscal Year 2027.

Today, I am accompanied in the St. Croix legislative chambers and virtually from the legislative chambers on St. Thomas by Ms. Claudette Farrington, Director of the Division of Business and Financial Management; Attorney Glendina Matthew, Director of the Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation; Mr. Ludence A. Romney, the Tax Assessor for the Division of Real Property Tax; Mr. Brent Leerdam, the Tax Collector for the Division of Real Property Tax; Mr. Chris George, Administrator for the Division of Geospatial Information Systems; Ms. Denise Johannes, Director of the Division of Corporations and Trademarks; Ms. Erica Dover, the Recorder of Deeds for the St. Thomas/St. John District; Ms. C. Portia Joseph, the Recorder of Deeds for the St. Croix District; Ms. Kishma Dorset, Supervisor of the Passport Acceptance Facility for the St. Thomas/St. John District; Ms. Ruthline Peters, Supervisor for the Passport Acceptance Facility for the St. Croix District; Ms. Rose Maduro, Director of the VI SHIP/Medicare Program; Mr. Lance McKay, Director of

Management Information Systems; Ms. Magdalene Burke, Assistant Director, Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation; Ms. Chalma Moorhead, the Assistant Tax Assessor for the Division of Real Property Tax; and Ms. Laura Bedminster, Assistant Director of the Division of Corporations and Trademarks.

INTRODUCTION

Collectively, the divisions within LGO provide essential services to the people of the Virgin Islands. These essential services include, but are not limited to: (1) the licensing, registration, and regulation of businesses that fall within the jurisdiction of the respective divisions; (2) the recording and the provision of access to critical land ownership documents and information; (3) the collection and provision of access to geospatial data used by public and private entities that provide emergency, navigational and other essential services; (4) the acceptance of passport applications which makes it possible for members of this community to travel around the world; (5) the appointment of notaries and the processing of apostilles to authenticate official documents to be used and recognized in foreign countries, when travelling in and out of the United States; (6) assessment of real property in the Virgin Islands and collection of taxes thereto; and (7) the education and counseling of the members of this community regarding the services offered by LGO divisions, through outreach.

LGO's divisions generate significant revenue for the Government of the Virgin Islands, making LGO the second largest revenue generating government agency in the Territory. In fiscal year 2025, LGO collected $121,148,636.00 in revenues for the Government of the Virgin Islands. As of June 2026, the divisions within LGO collected $78,162,505.00 ($2,970,160.19 in money transmission fees); whereas $74,939,992.07 ($1,282,024.00 in money transmission fees) was collected during the same period last fiscal year, which is a 4.3% increase. The total revenue collections for FY2026 across LGO's divisions is estimated to be $125,458,523.93 with $3,930,160.19 in money transmission fees, which is a 3.6% increase of collections in FY2025. The total revenue collections across LGO's divisions for fiscal year 2027 is projected to be

$127,774,230.00 with $3,840,000.00 in money transmission fees.

Since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2025, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, under the direction of Lieutenant Governor Roach, continues to provide the above-referenced critical services to the members of this community and to generate significant revenues for this Territory with transparency, efficiency, consistency and integrity. The accomplishments and goals of LGO's various divisions play a critical role to restore, rebuild and maintain a more resilient Virgin Islands community.

BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027

LGO's General Fund Budget for FY2027 decreased from $7,743,246.00 in FY2026 to $7,661,158.00, a difference of $82,088.00 or a decrease of 1.06%. The total Operating Budget for FY2027 is $22,742,642.00.

FY 2026 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FY 2027 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Despite some challenges during FY2026, the very dedicated, experienced, qualified and competent staff across all of LGO's various divisions continue to perform their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently and have had several noteworthy accomplishments as a result of their hard work, dedication and continued sacrifices. On behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, we publicly commend the members of LGO's staff without whom LGO could not have achieved any of its goals.

It takes nine divisions as illustrated on Office of the Lieutenant Governor's website to make this Office work: Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation, Office of the Tax Assessor, Office of the Tax Collector (The Office of Tax Assessor and Tax Collector collectively represent the Real Property Tax Division), Corporations and Trademarks Division, the Recorder of Deeds Office, Geospatial Information Systems Division (GISD), Passport Division, VI SHIP/Medicare and Notaries Public Division; and the Divisions that support the aforementioned Divisions: Division of Business and Financial Management, Division of Management Information

Systems; Office of the Legal Counsel. Therefore, in actuality, twelve divisions contribute to the woven fabric and amazing machine called the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

The Division of Business and Financial Management continues to serve as the nucleus of all financial activities and operations for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, including preparing and managing LGO's budget, providing budgetary support and overseeing the day-to-day financial procurement for all divisions within LGO, to include: facilitating the procurement of supplies and services and centralizing the maintenance of all personnel, time and attendance activity, financial records, processing vendor payments, including payments for all leases and contractual obligations of LGO's various divisions, and processing the payroll. Additionally, the Division is responsible for the overall collection of revenues with the direct oversight of cashier services.

This Division has worked tirelessly on LGO's Fiscal Year 2027 budget, which was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget via OpenGov. The Division also implemented the Fiscal Year 2025 Salary Increases for unionized employees under the Master Agreement for Steelworker's of America, coupled with processing retroactive payments associated with the increases. The Division participated in the year-end FY 2025 GVI Financial System closing process and more recently has been engaging in learning and applying the Department of Property and Procurement's new GVI e-procurement system, GVIBUY.

As stated in our FY2026 Budget testimony, the long-awaited services to repair and renovate the Sion Farm Greathouse at Estate Sion Farm on St. Croix as a result of the damages caused by two (2) Category 5 hurricanes (Irma and Maria) at Estate Sion Farm in St. Croix began in 2025. As you may be aware, repairs to this historic structure must meet exacting standards and must be closely monitored. The Division actively participates in bi-weekly meetings with the contractor, architect, the Department of Public Works ("DPW"), the Office of Disaster Recovery ("ODR"), VITEMA, and the

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the progress of this ongoing renovation project. Site visits and meetings are conducted to track the progress of the ongoing work by the contractor with input from the architect, the project manager (DPW), the ODR, VITEMA, LGO, and the Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office (VISHPO).

In FY2026 to date, the Division commenced and completed the mold remediation project at LGO's Administrative offices at the Main Office Building on Government Hill on St. Thomas and oversaw the completion of additional elevator repair measures at the Main Administrative Building of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor to ensure safety and security measures are in place. Additionally, the Division reviewed Scopes of Work for submission for supply contract services (e.g. cleaning, exterminating, landscaping, etc.) for LGO's offices territory-wide in both districts and participated in the selection of supply contract services for the St. Thomas – St. John District, coupled with involvement in other evaluation committees for our agency and/or a specific division under our agency.

In FY2026, the Division facilitated hiring seven (7) new employees: 4 employees in the St. Croix District & three (3) employees in the St. Thomas/St. John District. In FY 2026, LGO had nine (9) separations to include: three (3) resignations: 1 employee in the St. Croix District and two (2) employees in the St. Thomas/St. John District and six (6) retirements: two (2) employees in the St. Croix District & four (4) in the St. Thomas/St. John District. Currently, there are thirty-two (32) vacancies at LGO.

We are pleased to announce that LGO has requested that the former First Bank Building in Christiansted, St. Croix be placed out for solicitation. The solicitation was advertised on July 21, 2026 and the Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for July 22, 2026. The former First Bank Building will house the Office of the Tax Assessor, Recorder of Deeds Office, Geospatial Information Systems Division and Tellers. This process has been challenging; however, we are pleased to report that we are on the way to renovating the building to relocate the employees.

The Division's goals and objectives for FY2027 include, but are not limited to:

(1) attending meetings to monitor the progress and completion of the repairs and renovations to the Sion Fram Greathouse; (2) participating in the selection of vendors for necessary services that will involve supply contracts (cleaning, exterminating, etc.) territory-wide via the Department of Property and Procurement and its Open Market Informal Bid process; (3) facilitating filling positions in various divisions due to resignations and retirements, particularly given that five (5) employees are eligible for retirement; (4) preparing and submitting the FY 2028 budget to OMB via OpenGov; (5) facilitate needed remediation efforts to address challenges pertaining to mold and mildew on an ongoing basis; (6) completing the year-end fiscal closing process while continuing to transition relative to DPP's new e-procurement system (GVIBUY).

We commend the very small staff of the Division of Business and Financial Management for their hard work, commitment, dedication, and sacrifice to ensure that LGO employees receive compensation for their work, have safe and comfortable working environments, have the resources they need to perform their duties and responsibilities, are able to provide the crucial services to the members of the Virgin Islands Community and to generate revenues for this government. In the Administrative Office, thank you, Director Claudette Farrington, Paschan Dixon, Jermaine Estrill, Jasmine Powell; and Facilities - Matty Sealey, Jelonn James and Jacqueline Jones.

Additionally, we want to applaud the employees of Revenue Collections who diligently and tirelessly accept payments to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Thank you for your service and long hours of work particularly around June 30th and August 30th. Thank you, Chiefs of Revenue Collection Arleen Chandler and Anita Bright, and Akeela Thompson, Chavanne Pennyfeather, Colette Lake, Darlene Rabsatt, Shanee Whyte, Jah'Nester Benjamin, Gloryvi Carino, Eloise Charles, Tishan Matthew, Marcia Pickering and Lajuana Williams, and Isis Braningan.

The Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation, which is a regulatory agency with statutory and administrative authority to license, regulate and supervise banks, insurance entities and other financial services entities and related service providers, as well as administer the Virgin Islands Unclaimed Property program subject to titles 9, 12A, 22 and 28 of the Virgin Islands Code in the United States Virgin Islands. The Division conducts its duties and responsibilities through its Administrative, Legal, Licensing, Examination, Financial Services, Securities, and Other Financial Services Units. Specifically, the Division regulates, mortgage brokers and lenders; small loan companies; international financial services entities; finance brokers and lenders; captive insurers; securities firms and investment advisors; money transmitters and its delegates, non-bank ATMS; check cashers and currency exchanges; insurance companies; insurance producers (insurance agents & brokers), insurance adjusters; third party administrators; unclaimed property and debt management providers.

The Lieutenant Governor serves as Commissioner of Insurance, Chairman of the Virgin Islands Banking Board, and Administrator of Securities and Unclaimed Property and Administrator of the Securities Unit.

The Division collected $35,911,316.00 in FY2025. As of June 30, 2026, the Division collected $19,046,016.70 in the Banks and Insurance Fund; and $9,611,539.65 in the Financial Services Fund for a total of $28,657,556.35. Thus, far, $2,970,160.19 was collected in the Money Transmission Revolving Fund. This is a portion of the total revenue collected by LGO and indicates an increase of $1,329,402.71 or 4.9% from the amount of $27,328,153.64 that was collected during the same period of fiscal year 2025. In FY2026, the Division is projected to collect $27,346,016.70 in the Banks and Insurance Fund, $10,431,539.65 in the Financial Services Fund for a total of $37,777,556.35. In FY 2026, $3,930,160.19 is projected to be collected this fiscal year in the Money Transmission Revolving Fund.

The Division is projected to collect $37,870,000.00 in FY2027, $3,840,000.00 is projected to be collected in the Money Transmission Revolving Fund.

In FY2026, the Division continued to work closely with the Legislature: updating the insurance code, drafting legislation, and providing testimony on several measures designed to strengthen the Territory's regulatory framework. The Division drafted and supported: (1) **Bill No. 36-0184**, now **Act No. 9073**, which modernizes the Virgin Islands Insurance Holding Company System Regulatory Act. These amendments were recommended by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners ("NAIC") in order to maintain the Virgin Islands' insurance regulatory accreditation; and (2) **Bill No. 36-0219**, now **Act No. 9084**, which aligns the continuing education requirements for resident individual insurance producers and adjusters with a new two-year licensing cycle. The legislation replaced the former one-year license term with a two-year term and changed license expiration dates from December 31st to the last day of each licensee's birth month, thereby simplifying the renewal process for licensees while improving administrative efficiency.

Additionally, the Division supported **Bill No. 36-0236**, now **Act No. 9100**, which strengthens the Territory's insurance guaranty protections. Specifically, the legislation increased the required Virgin Islands Guaranty Fund from **$50 million to $55 million** and increased the maximum amount recoverable by a policyholder or third-party claimant, following an insurer insolvency, from **$49,950 to $74,950**; and **Bill No. 36-0019**, which proposes to prohibit merchants from imposing surcharges on consumers for the use of credit or debit cards. The Bill remains pending before the Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture.

Beyond proposed legislation, the Division appeared before the Committee on Housing, Transportation and Telecommunications on September 10, 2025, to discuss issues affecting the Territory's residential housing market. During that hearing, the Division provided an update on its NAIC accreditation, discussed prevailing economic conditions, and addressed the availability and affordability of both property insurance and financing within the United States Virgin Islands.

The Division remains committed to maintaining a highly trained and knowledgeable workforce. During the reporting period, Division personnel participated in numerous professional development programs, including: 2024 National Association of Insurance Commissioners ("NAIC") Fall National Meeting; Nationwide Multistate Licensing System ("NMLS") Training; North American Securities Administrators Association ("NASAA") Training; 2025 NAIC Summer Meeting; NASAA Fall Meeting; NAIC Summit; 2025 National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) New Regulator Training and Fall National Meeting. These educational opportunities ensure that Division personnel remain current on emerging regulatory issues, evolving industry standards, and best practices.

The Division continues to strengthen its workforce to better serve the public and fulfill its regulatory responsibilities. We stated in our FY2026 Budget testimony that due to retirement, this Division faced challenges in attracting applicants with the requisite specialized educational requirements and skill sets to fill these positions. However, we are pleased to announce that revisions to existing Job Specifications were completed with the assistance of the Division of Personnel to expand the number of eligible candidates and enhance recruitment opportunities, which resulted in filling various positions. Therefore, during FY 2026, the Division welcomed: two (2) Financial Services Examiners; one (1) Consumer Protection Officer; and one (1) Banks and Insurance Regulatory Analyst. Additionally, the Division is currently onboarding: two (2) Insurance Licensing Examiners; and one (1) Administrative Coordinator. These additions will significantly enhance the Division's licensing, examination, consumer protection, and regulatory mandates, which are critical for succession planning, as several of the Division's employees are qualified for retirement.

To provide guidance and promote regulatory compliance, the Division issued the following bulletins: **Bulletin 2025-04**-Administration of Individual Producers, Adjusters, and Interested Parties in the Territory Examination Policy; **Bulletin 2025-03** – Administration of Resident Individual Insurance Producer and Adjuster Examinations in the Territory; **Bulletin 2025-02** – Eligible Unauthorized Insurers in the United States Virgin Islands; **Bulletin 2025-01** – Adoption of the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA) Model Rule on Investment Adviser Representative

Continuing Education.

As part of its ongoing modernization initiatives, the Division implemented an Automated Clearing House ("ACH") payment option for the Unclaimed Property Program in October 2025. This enhancement allows holders to submit payments electronically through a secure platform, improving operational efficiency while providing greater convenience to stakeholders. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor returned to Two Hundred Thirty-eight (238) customers in Fiscal Year 2025 a total of $1,061,654.33 in unclaimed funds. Based on the total claims filed, Two Hundred Twenty-Five (225) of the claims were filed through the US Virgin Islands Unclaimed Property portal, which was launched in April 2024.

Consumer education remains an important component of the Division's mission. During the reporting period, Division staff participated in numerous community outreach events. These outreach initiatives provided valuable opportunities to educate residents regarding insurance, banking, financial services, securities regulation, and consumer protection.

The Virgin Islands Banking Board convened its annual two-day meeting on September 25 and 26, 2025. During these meetings, the Board reviewed the condition of licensed banking institutions operating within the Territory, discussed supervisory matters, and considered issues affecting the banking industry and financial stability of the United States Virgin Islands, as well as other matters before the board. The Division continues to actively engage with licensed banks in the territory to resolve consumer complaints and inquiries.

The Division conducted its annual hurricane preparedness meetings with licensed banks and insurance companies maintaining significant exposure within the territory to assess and discuss each institution's operational readiness for the hurricane season and its ability to continue serving policyholders and customers in the event of a catastrophic disaster. These meetings focused on business continuity planning, claims response capabilities, communication protocols, and the availability of financial resources necessary to ensure uninterrupted service during and after a catastrophic event. In addition to its annual preparedness initiative, the Division met with its most active Property and Casualty insurers to discuss the availability of insurance capacity and ongoing efforts to maintain a stable and competitive insurance market.

To provide perspective, between 2021 and 2024, the U.S. Virgin Islands along with several hurricane prone jurisdictions, including Florida experienced significant challenges in the property insurance market. In response to these market conditions, the Division worked closely with insurers to preserve market stability while protecting consumers. Following an actuarial review, several insurers were granted limited rate adjustments of up to five percent to maintain financial stability and to ensure the continued availability of coverage. Since January 2025, the Division has not received any additional requests for homeowners' insurance rate increases. Notably, one insurer submitted and received approval for a modest rate reduction after restructuring its reinsurance program.

The Division is pleased to report that, during our hurricane preparedness meetings earlier this month, insurance companies advised that market conditions have improved considerably. Companies indicated that the property insurance market has softened, reinsurance capacity has expanded and, absent a significant catastrophic event affecting the region, homeowners' insurance rates in the Territory are expected to remain stable. The companies also reported increased capacity, improving the availability of property insurance coverage for residents and businesses throughout the territory.

The Division is also pleased to further announce that an insurer has reinstituted a structured discretionary discount framework for eligible property insurance risks, effective August 1, 2026. This initiative establishes a consistent and controlled approach to discretionary pricing while supporting underwriting discipline, maintaining pricing adequacy, and ensuring compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. Under the framework, eligible new and renewal policyholders may be considered for discretionary premium discounts ranging from 5% to 15%, subject to underwriting review and approval. Eligibility for discounts will be determined based on various factors, including, but not limited to: Favorable claims performance; Customer loyalty and policy tenure; and Multi-policy arrangements or other established business relationships. The Division recognizes this initiative as a positive development that may provide additional opportunities for eligible policyholders while promoting responsible underwriting practices and maintaining a stable insurance marketplace.

In FY2026-2027, the Division strives to continue timely examinations and investigations and annual reviews of financial statements of licensed companies by Financial Services Examiners; initiate comprehensive examinations of Broker-Dealers and Investment Advisors domiciled in the Territory; continue working with insurers that have expressed their interest in offering individual and group health insurance to Virgin Islands residents; continue building the workforce capacity required to deliver on the Division's mission; continue developing brochures and other educational materials, while expanding consumer outreach initiatives to promote financial literacy, educate the public, and safeguard consumer rights; continue enhancing the online Unclaimed Property system to improve operational efficiency, support staff in the administration of the program, and streamline the online claims process for individuals seeking to recover unclaimed property; continue reviewing, refining, and modernizing local insurance and banking laws to ensure that the laws effectively meet the needs of the people of the Virgin Islands; advance the implementation of a new check-writing software designed to optimize and streamline the division's unclaimed property workflow; and coordinate and host in both districts the Virgin Islands Insurance Industry Symposium.

The Division remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining a safe, sound, and well-regulated financial services marketplace while protecting the interests of United States Virgin Islands consumers. Through legislative initiatives, regulatory modernization, professional development, technological enhancements, public outreach, and continued collaboration with industry stakeholders and policymakers, the Division continues to strengthen its regulatory framework and enhance public confidence in the financial services sector.

We commend and thank the hardworking staff of the Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation who continue to perform their statutorily mandated duties competently and effectively to ensure that the best interest of the people of this Territory is served. Thank you, Director Glendina Matthew, Esq., Ashton Bertrand, Cheleen Saldano, Sylvia Browne, Pauline Lynch, Jennisha Joseph, Nesta Seaton Clarke and Anna Lewis in the St. Croix District and Assistant Director and Chief of Securities Registration Magdalene Burke, Natoya Cole, Juliette Daniel, Martin Emmauel Sr., Kathleen Peters-Fleming, Valecia Patrick- Morris, Condaisy Richards, Vanessa Richards, Louise Williams, Isaac Banson, Anna Alexander, Reyna Jolly, Thaner Richards in the St. Thomas/St. John District.

The Division of Real Property Tax, which consists of the Office of Tax Assessor and Office of the Tax Collector "administer[s] and enforce[s] all laws relating to the assessment, levy and collection of real property taxes and to attachment and sale of real property for the non-payment of real property taxes." The Division of Real Property Tax comprises the Office of the Tax Assessor and the Office of the Tax Collector. The Office of the Tax Assessor prepares real property tax bills, which are sent to real property tax owners in June informing them of real property tax arrearages and public sewer fees owed, as well as any interest and penalties owed, if applicable. The Office of the Tax Collector receives payment of real property taxes and upon request, issues tax clearance letters. Pursuant to Title 33 of the Virgin Islands Code, section 2492, real property taxes are due on June 30th and considered delinquent if not paid by August 30th of each year. Based on the aforementioned deadlines, the Division experiences an insurgence in real property tax revenue in July and August, before the taxes become delinquent.

In FY2025, the Office of the Tax Collector collected $56,062,091.13 in real property taxes. As of June 30, 2026, the Office of the Tax Collector collected $26,839,768.00 which is a 10.3% increase over $24,332,151.00, which was collected during the same period of FY2025. The Office of the Tax Collector is projected to collect $57,463,643.41 in FY 2026 and $58,900,000.00 in FY 2027.

When real property taxes are delinquent, the Division of Real Property has options to collect real property tax arrearages through tax lien sales, auctions and judicial foreclosure in rem proceedings, the latter of which is initiated with a Court filing. Pursuant to Title 33 of the Virgin Islands Code, section 2541(d), residents who are considered middle & low-to-moderate income, veterans, first-time homebuyers, seniors and disabled persons will have the opportunity to obtain property through this process. Given the varied categories of individuals who may avail themselves of this process in addition to other issues, we are currently working to finalize the Rules and Regulations for judicial foreclosure *in rem* proceedings to ensure that the procedures are fair and just. Once the Rules and Regulations have been finalized, we also plan to have conversation with the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands to address how the claims can be handled and expedited. The use of in-rem jurisdiction foreclosure will greatly enhance our ability to process delinquent parcels, and it will also result in an increase of payments for delinquent property taxes and in the creation of homeownership opportunities.

Installment payment plans are available for property owners, who cannot afford to pay their property taxes in full, which can only be utilized for delinquent years. By entering into a payment plan, it will stop the accrual of interest and penalties during the period that the plan is in effect. Interest and penalties that are accrued prior to the execution of the installment payment plan are not removed. In FY2025, real property owners entered into 514 installment payment plans. As of June 30, 2026 in FY2026, 197 installment payment plans have been established by homeowners who want to fulfill their obligations to pay their real property taxes. The Office of the Tax Collector anticipates that 522 installment plans will be entered by September 30, 2026, after which real property taxes are deemed delinquent.

Real property taxes are a vital source of revenue for all jurisdictions and countries all over the world. Therefore, it is crucial and essential that every real property owner fulfills his/her obligation to pay their respective real property taxes. The online citizen's access portal at https://propertytax.vi.gov, can be assessed 24 hours a day from the comfort of your home, place of employment or vacation spot to pay your real property taxes. Installment plans can also be entered into and maintained at https://propertytax.vi.gov.

In an effort to increase the real property tax revenue, the Office of the Tax Collector continues to contact property tax owners to pay their respective taxes and public sewer fees and, if applicable, interest and penalties. The Real Property Tax Division remains committed to providing Public Awareness Campaigns *via* various social media and radio in FY2026 and continuing in FY2027 to provide information and encourage taxpayers to pay their real property taxes.

As stated in our FY2026 Budget Testimony, the Office of the Tax Assessor onboarded three (3) new Appraisers in the St. Thomas/St. John District. Thus far in FY2026, 862 properties have been inspected; and 5,746 parcels should be inspected in the St. Thomas/St. John District, and 6,470 in the St. Croix District. Armed with additional appraisers and other personnel in the Real Property Tax Division, as illustrated in the Budget FY2027, this will enable us to accomplish and fulfill our mandates more efficiently and effectively.

The Real Property Tax Division is also committed to continuing education. To close out the Fiscal Year 2025, the Office of the Tax Assessor staff attended the IAAO ("International Association of Assessing Officers") conference and training, where staff participated in educational discussions with jurisdictions from around the nation and learned about advanced systems that are utilized in various jurisdictions for tax assessment.

In FY2026 and 2027, the Division is also committed to participate in community outreach events to inform the public about the mandates of the Real Property Tax Division and provide information to the citizens of the Virgin Islands.

As requested in our FY2026 Budget testimony, LGO requests that consideration be given to removing or increasing the Five Hundred Thousand Dollar ($500,000.00) cap on the Tax Assessor Revolving Fund to assist the Division in generating more revenue for the Territory and in carrying out all of its legislative mandates. Pursuant to Title 33 of the Virgin Islands Code, section 2456, the [Office of the Tax Assessor

Revolving] "Fund shall consist of one percent of the real property taxes collected annually by the Tax Assessor or an amount not to exceed $500,000 per annum . . ." Accordingly, for FY2025, if there were no cap, the Real Property Tax Division would have realized 1% of ($56,062,000.00) or $560,062; not $500,000 for the Tax Assessor Revolving Fund.

The Cadastral Division maintains efficient operations and performs a vital service to the general public, especially to the Civil or Land Administration industry, Title Insurance Companies, attorneys, and banks with the assistance of L. Chirs George, the Administrator of the Geospatial Information Systems Division, who had previous experience as a land surveyor at LGO. Mr. George initially started with the Lieutenant Governor's Office as a Cadastral Technician/GIS Specialist and assisted with the development of cadastral databases, built out the digital map storage schema, created new request forms, map prints, and survey registrations. To date the GISD still oversees all large-scale Cadastral projects such as the Benchmark Network Control Project and mass database updates.

In FY 2026 and 2027, the Cadastral Division, Office of the Tax Assessor, seeks to improve overall services, upgrade customer experience, and establish formal, reliable operating procedures. In a recent survey completed by surveyors and engineers, the Cadastral Division receives positive feedback ranging from a score of 1 – 5, 5 being the highest: 1) duration of time expended in the Map Registration Process from Submission to formal Registration wherein the feedback was 4.40 out of 5; 2) assistance for Cadastral products such as Map requests, Adjacent ownership, Earth Change packages was 3.80 out of 5; and 3) Cadastral Mapping Unit's - capacity and knowledge base in matters of surveying; civil, legal, or otherwise was 4.20 out 5. In FY2025, the Cadastral Division collected $229,032.00. As of June 30, 2026, the Cadastral Division Collected $180,247.00; and is projected to collect $252,630.00 in FY2026 and the same amount in FY2027.

We publicly commend and thank the very dedicated and hard-working staff of the Division of Real Property Tax for their hard work in continuing to serve the members of the Virgin Islands community and generating the necessary revenue for the Government of the Virgin Islands. Thank you, Tax Assessor Ludence A. Romney, Deputy Paulette Ible, Welby Warner, Sakeena George, Paula Matthew, Colleen Wallace, Deborah Maximin and Sandra Gustave, Cadastral – L. Chris George, Elita Bradshaw and Sharim Jones, Appraisers Asham Nibbs, Darrol Goodings and Sha'Quan Wallace in the St. Thomas/St. John District and Assistant Tax Assessor Chalma Moorhead, Deputy Tax Assessor Laura Acoy, Zulma Aloyo, Ruth Perkins, Pamela Ritter, Sakinah Rauf, Carmen Francis, Cadastral –Shenell Bailey-Porter and Appraisers **Leila** Benjamin, Miguel Encarnacion, Henrique McAplin, Albert Schjang, Michael Williams in the St. Croix District; Tax Collector Brent A. Leerdam, Latoya Liburd and Aliya Alexander in the St. Thomas/St. John District and Jacqueline Rosario and Nigel Gore in the St. Croix District.

The Division of Geospatial Information Systems "GIS" Division (GISD) of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, which is responsible for providing the critical geospatial backbone for the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands. The GISD under the supervision of its Administrator, manages the development, maintenance, and distribution of Virgin Islands infrastructure, GIS information and related databases. GISD implements GISD policies, procedures, standards, and provides intra-agency technical leadership, information management, and project coordination. Additionally, GISD produces income by networking and providing services to local government agencies, federal government agencies, and the private sector through the administration of the GISD platform. These capabilities have positioned the Office of Lieutenant Governor as a Caribbean Region leader in the field of GIS in Government Infrastructure.

The goal of the GISD is to use the power of modern mapping technologies to improve the Territory's functions and achieve cost savings through increased efficiency, better informed decision making, enhanced communication, accessible and simplified record keeping and increased citizen engagement.

In FY2026, GISD received $5,300,000.00 in federal funding, to be utilized for the SAI project, $2.8 million dollars of which has been expended to date. The SAI is funded through the Community Development Block Grant managed through the Office of Disaster Recovery.

In FY 2026, we are pleased to announce that GISD successfully tested and completed the St. John Addressing Grid with E911 Computer Aided Dispatch system with SAI stakeholders VIPD, VI Fire & Emergency Services, Bureau of Information Technology. This was a live test involving St. John residents calling 911 with varying emergencies and only using their street address as location. During the test, St. John residents would call VIFEMS or VIPD, and in three (3) out of three (3) attempts each responding unit was able to easily locate and transit to the incident in expedited time. (No more go up the road and turn by the Mango Tree). The GIS Division attained a third grant from Office of Highway Safety, totaling $170,000.00 for the purchase of surveying hardware and acquisition of new Aerial Fly-overs for the entire Territory. In FY2026, GISD also completed over eighty-five (85%) of St. Thomas & St. Croix naming and addressing roads; as well as completed Phase One of the Benchmark Network Control Project installations funded by FEMA at $7.8M, for over eighty (80) new NOAA National Geodetic Survey Markers throughout the Territory.

In FY 2027, GISD has the following goals: complete Phase 2 of the Benchmark Network Control Project, which will establish a more resilient geographic grid for the Territory, as well as improve our overall GPS capabilities; and continuing to partner with the Department of Public Works to manage the Critical Infrastructure Data Sharing program to facilitate the best implementation of the "Call Before You Dig" Legislation pursuant to Act 7798; continues to update USVI Road & Estate data on the global Open Street Map platform, which is the basis for all global mapping engines like Google, Apple Maps, Tom Tom and ESRI; participation in community outreach; and will continue to realize the goals of the Street Addressing Initiative by assisting various Virgin Islands communities and homeowners' associations in naming streets in their neighborhoods.

We commend the very small, yet hard-working and dedicated staff of this Division who have worked tirelessly in the Street Addressing and Street Naming Initiatives, which will improve and assist in saving the lives of the citizens of this community. They are on social media, radio, participate in Carnival and Festival parades and even drive through in your neighborhoods, now commonly known as "The Street Namers." Thank you, Administrator L. Chris George and John Gumbs in the St. Thomas/St. John District and Pedro Nieves in the St. Croix District.

The Recorder of Deeds Office ("ROD"), which is responsible for the recording and filing of deeds, mortgages, contracts, liens (including federal and local), releases of mortgages, and all other legal instruments relating to the transfer of title and encumbrances on all real and personal property. The Recorder of Deeds Office is also responsible for the sale of all revenue stamps. In FY2025, the Recorder of Deeds Office collected $18,521,335.84 in stamp taxes and other fees. As of June 30, 2026, the Recorder of Deeds Office collected $14,010,741.00 in stamp taxes and other fees, a 5.67% decrease compared to FY2025, ROD collected $14,852,733.00. In FY2026, the Recorder of Deeds Office is estimated to collect $19,500,000.00 in stamp taxes and other fees and projected to collect $20,000,00.00 in FY2027.

In our testimony last year, we stated that one of our goals would be to provide continuous online service to customers when there are service interruptions such as those caused by electrical power outages, and the new contract with the same vendor provides complete online Cloud services. Therefore, we have been able to provide uninterrupted service to our customers. In FY2027, the Office will engage in outreach with other divisions such as the Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation to provide brochures regarding the procedure to record documents and will continue to provide excellent customer service.

We commend the knowledgeable, experienced, hard-working and dedicated staff of this Office for the crucial service they provide to this community. Thank you to Recorder of Deeds C. Portia Joseph and Luis Felix in the St. Croix District and

Recorder of Deeds Erica Dover, Ingrid Lake and Rachel Griffin in the St. Thomas/St. John District.

The Division of Corporations and Trademarks, which collected $8,879,902.66 in registration fees, filing fees, and franchise taxes in FY2025, which is a 13.2% increase over Fiscal Year 2024 collections of $7,843,588.72. As of May 31, 2026, the Division actually collected $4,129,630.64; and as of June 30, 2026, the Division collected $7,437,403.00; in registration fees, filing fees, and franchise taxes, which is an 80.1% increase. The Division experiences its highest peak in collections in the month of June, as June 30th is the deadline for registered entities to pay their Franchise Taxes. By the end of FY2026, the Division is estimated to collect $9,112,408.26 in registration fees, filing fees, and franchise taxes, which is a 2.6% increase over the revenue collected in FY2025. In FY2027, the Division is projected to collect $9,350,000.00.

In FY2025, based on upgrades to the Catalyst System, the Division provided online access to all of its registered entities and continues to provide outreach to its users to assist them in remaining compliant with the franchise tax and annual report requirements. In FY2026, the Division entered into a new contract with Foster Moore US LLC, which *inter alia*, streamlines the system to reduce customer glitches, allows access of name availability without staff involvement; adds conversion services from partnerships to corporations and LLCs and vice-versa; and enhances delivery of services to customers.

In FY2026 and FY2027, the Division will continue to increase revenue collections for the Government of the Virgin Islands; continue to participate in workshops informing current and prospective business owners of their statutory requirements; continue to increase service delivery to filers through its online Catalyst system.

The Division of Corporations and Trademarks' staff is always ready to assist customers and answer any inquiries. Thank you to Director Denise Johannes, Assistant

Director Laura Bedminster, Aloma Hyndman, Jeanette Rhymer and Angela Mills in the St. Thomas/St. John District and Assistant Director Lynn Isidore, Kerlyn Constable and Karina Martinez in the St. Croix District.

V.I. SHIP/ Medicare Program, which comprises of two federal programs: (1) the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, also known as "SHIP" and (2) the Medicare Program. The V.I. SHIP/ Medicare Program continues to deliver on its mission to the members of this community through education, outreach, counseling and training. The Program provides Medicare information to the public through group presentations and a variety of media sources designed to educate our community about Medicare. The Program offers one-on-one assistance, counseling, and education to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to help them make informed decisions about their care, benefits and services; support people with limited incomes; as well as Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65 with disabilities, and individuals who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The Program proudly delivered guidance with billing inquiries, the Medicare appeal process and Medicare enrollment; and assisted Medicare beneficiaries with enrollment into the Medicare Prescription Plan (Part D) and Medigap/Supplement Plans.

In FY2026, as of May 2026, the Program had the following accomplishments: 488 Medicare eligible individuals were served in person at VI SHIP/Medicare offices or contacted *via* telephone or email: approximately 740 Medicare eligible individuals, caregivers and family members attended VI SHIP outreach events. The Program utilized media outlets to inform the public about the upcoming Open Enrollment Season to add their Part D for prescriptions to begin October 15th through December 7th. Additionally, the Program collaborated with other agencies like the Senior Medicare Patrol under Legal Services, United Health Care, and the State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program for outreach opportunities.

The VI SHIP/Medicare Program was awarded funding for Fiscal Year 2025 to run concurrently until 2027. The goals of the program for FY2027 include: informing seniors and ensuring that 64-year-old individuals apply for Part D coverage before their 65th

birthday (or three months thereafter) to avoid a one-percent (1%) penalty for every month or year that they are not covered.

Although it is a small office, we commend the experienced and dedicated staff of the VI SHIP/Medicare Program for their hard work and dedication in assisting the Territory's growing aging population in making sound and reasonable health coverage choices. Thank you to Director Rose Marie Maduro and Macy Mills in St. Thomas/St. John District and Glenys Herbert and O'Dani Evans in the St. Croix District. We commend the experienced and dedicated staff of the VI SHIP/Medicare Program for their hard work.

Passport Division - The Virgin Islands Passport Acceptance Facilities. The Virgin Islands Passport Acceptance Facilities are the local agencies designated to accept applications for U.S. passports in the Territory. The Virgin Islands falls under the Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs/Miami and San Juan Passport Agencies in this region. The Virgin Islands Passport Acceptance Facility plays a vital role in helping residents of the Virgin Islands obtain United States Passports without having to travel to another U.S. jurisdiction. The staff in the Passport Division accepts passport applications, verifies the identity of passport applicants, and educates its customers about passport services and products.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the amount of revenue collected was $1,491,341.50. As of June 30, 2026, the amount of revenue collected was $1,004,113.40 and is projected to collect $1,310,409.91 for FY2026. The Facilities are projected to collect $1,359,000.00 for FY 2027. The revenue collected by the Facilities goes into the general fund.

In FY 2026, the Facilities continued to provide excellent service to applicants, with current information regarding international travel and, new regulations from the Department of State. The Facilities further continued their collaboration with our local congressional Office to better serve our applicants who require emergency passport processing and, passport related services. Additionally, in FY2026, the Facilities completed the U.S. Department of State Web Training and Certification for Passport Acceptance Agencies for FY 2026.

We are pleased to announce that we will be onboarding two (2) new employees in the St. Thomas/St. John District at the end of July 2026.

In FY2027, the Facilities will continue to provide excellent customer service and uphold the integrity of the Passport Facility and, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

We commend the small but very dedicated and knowledgeable staff of the Passport Acceptance Facilities who continue to provide this crucial service to the members of this community. Thank you to Supervisor Kishma Dorset in the St. Thomas/St. John District and Supervisor Ruthline Peters and Malaysia Ilarraza in the St. Croix District.

The Division of Management Information Systems ("MIS"). MIS continues to provide technological support to all divisions within LGO, including: system management, diagnostic support and maintenance for LGO's computer and technology systems. The staff of the Division continues to upgrade security measures for the protection of LGO's data and to work with the various remote vendors contracted by LGO's divisions to create and maintain local systems and assist in contract negotiations regarding the technological systems that we utilize.

We commend the staff of the MIS Division for their hard work, commitment, and dedication in creating a more secure computer environment for LGO's staff and ensuring that the goals and objectives of LGO's many divisions to enhance the services they provide and to continue to generate significant revenues through automation are achieved. Thank you, Director Lance McKay, Deanna Hunt, Ludence Romney, Jr. in St. Thomas/St. John District and Cynthia Codrington and Carl Derricks in the St. Croix District.

The Office of Legal Counsel, which plays a critical role in the day-to-day operations of LGO. Specifically, Legal Counsel plays a critical role in the contract process for selecting the vendors that are responsible for creating, maintaining, and supporting the systems and databases utilized by LGO's divisions to provide services and collect revenue. Legal Counsel also drafts other legal documents and legislation needed for the efficient operations of all LGO divisions and works with the Virgin Islands Department of Justice to bring resolution to various legal matters affecting

LGO. Additionally, Legal Counsel provides legal advice and guidance to the Lieutenant Governor and the divisions within LGO regarding their statutory duties and responsibilities. The Office of the Legal Counsel oversees the Notaries Public Division.

The Notaries Public Division, which is directly responsible for the regulation of notaries public, who are commissioned by the Lieutenant Governor to act as public servants. With the assistance of another LGO employee on the island of St. Croix, this Division is staffed by the Notary Supervisor for the past seven years.

In FY2026, the Notaries Public Division provided specialized training for newly commissioned notaries in both the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Districts, while also promoting continuing education opportunities for experienced notaries. The Division also supports ongoing professional development through participation in seminars, conferences, and online educational programs that address evolving laws, industry standards, and best practices.

In FY2026, the Division has modernized recordkeeping and communication systems, which includes the development of the "Notary Newsletter" and "Notary Bulletin," which deliver valuable insights, regulatory updates, and practical strategies to registered notaries. By working closely with the Office of Legal Counsel, the Division strives to maintain legal compliance and integrity in notarial practices to ensure that every action aligns with statutory requirements. The forthcoming Notary Handbook will provide detailed legal standards and step-by-step procedural guidance, helping notaries fulfill their duties accurately and consistently. These efforts not only help deter fraud but also safeguard the trustworthiness of all notarized documents throughout the territory.

In FY2027, the Notaries Public Division strives to: develop and publish official territory-wide newsletters, educational bulletins, and technical regulatory updates to ensure consistent communication of statutory and procedural guidance to all commissioned notaries; intends to formalize and implement a standardized notary examination to assess applicants' understanding of their quasi-fiduciary duties, legal obligations, and potential liabilities, thereby strengthening entry-level competency and professional accountability. Additionally, the Division will expand corrective training and refresher programs for individuals subject to disciplinary action to reinforce compliance and reduce repeat violations; secure the modernization of the Division's technological infrastructure, which includes partnering with technology vendors to develop and maintain secure electronic databases for notary records, digital histories, and financial documentation; as well as advancing the transition to a fully electronic workflow for applications, renewals, commissions, and Apostille services, which will provide greater transparency, improved service delivery, and a more efficient regulatory framework for the Territory. The Division will continue to strengthen the integrity of the notarial process, improve compliance with statutory requirements, and reinforce public confidence in notarial services throughout the Territory.

In FY2025, the Notaries Public Division collected $53,616.00; and as of June 2026, the Division collected $32,676.90, and it is estimated to collect $41,876.00 in FY2026, which is a 21.9% decrease over FY2025. The Division is projected to collect $42,600.00 for FY2027.

We commend the Notaries Public Division for its hard work, dedication and its many accomplishments. Thank you, Diana P. Brown, Supervisor of the Notaries Public Division and Raquel Penn, Assistant to the Office of the Legal Counsel Division.

We would also like to thank and commend Annice Canton, Petra Victor and Augustin Holder who assist Lieutenant Governor Roach and the operations of the office for their tremendous dedication and service.

We are pleased to recognize our outstanding Employees of the Year: Diana P. Brown in the St. Thomas/St. John District and Anita Bright in the St. Croix District. In addition, we thank this Legislative Body and Senator Degraff for a summer intern Donnel Dominique, who worked in the Office of the Tax Assessor. The following summer interns worked at LGO from the Summer Youth Work Experience Program (SYWEP), Department of Labor: Anju Sujanani, and Anjali Sujanani in the Office of the Tax Assessor; Janaya Petty in the Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation and Caitlin Subratee in MIS.

SUMMARY

As always, Lieutenant Governor Roach extends his heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the employees of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, recognizing their continued commitment, service and sacrifice to the Virgin Islands Government and the people of this Territory. He would also like to publicly thank the constituents for their input and those who have taken the time to call and write to the office to commend the staff for their good work and stellar customer service.

Mr. Chairman, we have presented you with an overview of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor's Fiscal Year 2026 accomplishments and the Fiscal Year 2027 goals and objectives, which must be achieved to allow LGO to continue to improve the crucial services provided to the members of this community and to enhance its capabilities to continue to collect significant revenues for the Government of the Virgin Islands. We thank you and your committee for this opportunity and hope for your favorable review and response to our requests. We are now available to answer any questions you may have.