

**TESTIMONY OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER AND POWER AUTHORITY
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCE
36TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
RE: BILL NO. 36-0274
June 8, 2026**

Good morning, Honorable Chairman Novelle E. Francis, Jr.; Honorable members of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance; Honorable Senators present; fellow testifiers; and members of the listening and viewing public. I am Dionne Sinclair, General Counsel for the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (which I may reference as “WAPA” or “the Authority”), appearing today on behalf of the Executive Director and CEO, Karl Knight.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Bill No. 36-0274, which would require the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority to provide compensation to homeowners in the LBJ Gardens community who have been displaced as a result of demolition activities on nearby VI Housing Finance Authority properties.

OVERVIEW OF THE AUTHORITY’S POSITION

WAPA appreciates the Legislature’s attention to this important matter and recognizes the urgency of ensuring that affected residents are relocated in a safe, fair, and equitable manner. The Authority supports Bill No. 36-0274 as proposed.

Over time, the LBJ Gardens area has evolved from a primarily residential neighborhood into a more industrialized zone. Today, it is surrounded by critical infrastructure and commercial operations, including the Waste Management Authority’s LBJ pump station, a boat yard, and WAPA’s Richmond Power Plant and related facilities, such as the fuel dock. These are essential, fixed assets that cannot be

readily relocated. As a result, the most practical and responsible path forward is to facilitate the voluntary relocation of residents through a structured and equitable process.

The bill establishes a clear and transparent framework for providing compensation, relocation assistance, and replacement housing to eligible homeowners. It also appropriately assigns responsibility for funding these efforts to the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority, consistent with its mission to promote housing stability and resilience across the Territory.

CONCLUSION

WAPA believes this legislation serves the best interests of the Government, the residents of the LBJ Gardens community, and the people of the Virgin Islands as a whole. It advances public safety, supports affected families during a difficult transition, and enables long-term development planning that benefits the broader community.

Accordingly, WAPA supports Bill No. 36-0274.

This concludes our testimony. We are available to answer any questions the Committee may have.