

Good Morning, Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance, other esteemed Members of the Committee, staff of the 36<sup>th</sup> Legislature, and the viewing and listening public.

My name is **Carmen Ruan**, and I am here today in support of Bill No. 36-0028 – The Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and **Tropical Marine, Inc. (“Tropical Marine”)**

Tropical Marine a locally owned business was founded by my late husband, **Levette Ruan** and me in 1980 from humble beginnings. Our Marina has endured the challenges of time, environmental factors, and natural disasters. Most recently, we navigated the impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, we have emerged strong and resilient. To continue effectively servicing our community and creating new jobs, it is essential for us to make significant upgrades and expand the Marina. The improvements will aid us in keeping up with the ever-growing Marine Industry here in the Virgin Islands.

Though my husband tragically passed in 2007, we are blessed today to have my son and grandson actively involved in the business. They are committed to continuing the legacy my husband and I began here in **Benner Bay**.

I Thank You for allowing me to testify today and stand ready to answer any questions you may have.