



# CARIBBEAN BUZZ

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**Testimony in Support of Lease Agreement with Caribbean Buzz, LLC**

**Before the 36th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands**

**Presented by:** Charlotte Van Heurck, Representative of Caribbean Buzz, LLC

**Date:** May 23, 2025

Good day

Chairman Senator Novelle E Francis Jr

Vice Chairman Senator Marvin Blyden

Members of the Committee

Senators

Kurt Vialet

Dwayne DeGraff

Ray Fonseca

Hubert Frederick

Marise James

And Members of the 36th Legislature and the listening Public:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in full support of the proposed lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and Caribbean Buzz, LLC for the heliport site located in Estate Susannaberg, St. John.

This lease is more than a land-use arrangement - it represents a vital solution to a long-standing challenge faced by residents, visitors, and emergency responders on the island of St. John.

**THE NEED IS REAL AND URGENT**

St. John is one of the only major Caribbean destinations without a commercial airport or scheduled airlift. Once the ferries stop running in the evening, there is no reliable transportation off the island.

This presents a serious challenge - especially for:

- Emergency medical evacuations
- Disaster response and recovery
- Time-sensitive travel by residents and visitors

This lease addresses that challenge head-on.

**WHO WE ARE: CARIBBEAN BUZZ, LLC**

Caribbean Buzz was founded by my parents, Nicolas Van Heurck and the late Maria Rodriguez, who devoted their lives to aviation and service to the Virgin Islands. My mother was a pioneer in the field,

and today her legacy lives on - the helipad at Schneider Regional Medical Center is named in her honor.

As a family-owned, FAA-compliant helicopter operator, our commitment to the Virgin Islands is personal and generational. I believe my mother would be proud of our continued efforts to serve these islands with purpose, professionalism, and love.

#### WHAT THIS LEASE PROVIDES

Under this lease, Caribbean Buzz will:

- Maintain and operate the existing helipad for medical evacuations and essential transport
- Invest over \$40,000 in improvements, including:
  - Repainting the helipad
  - Installing a windsock and landing lights
  - Creating a covered waiting area
  - Landscaping and site clean-up
  - Complete all improvements within 24 months
  - Maintain full insurance coverage and pay taxes on all improvements
  - Comply with all local permitting, zoning, and environmental laws

Importantly, all permanent improvements revert to the Government at the end of the lease - building long-term public value at no cost to the taxpayer.

#### BENEFITS TO ST. JOHN AND THE TERRITORY

This lease delivers:

- Critical after-hours evacuation capability when ferry service is unavailable
- A reliable, trusted, local operator with a proven record of service
- Enhanced emergency and disaster response readiness
- A cost-effective public-private partnership that places no financial burden on the Government
- A long-overdue and meaningful infrastructure improvement for an underserved island

#### CLOSING REQUEST

As a proud Virgin Islander whose family has called St. Thomas home for five generations, I respectfully urge this body to approve the lease.

Caribbean Buzz stands ready to enhance safety, accessibility, and emergency response for the people of St. John, and we are honored to do so in continued service to these islands we call home.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.

Charlotte Van Heurck  
Caribbean Buzz, LLC

