Good morning Chairman Novelle E. Francis, Vice-Chair Marvin E. Blyden, Committee members – Honorable Senators, Kurt A. Vialet, Dwayne M. DeGraff, Ray Fonseca, Hubert L. Frederick, and Marise C. James, Non-Committee members, Central and Legislative Staff and fellow testifiers**.**

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is **Randa M. DeSuza**, and I serve as the **Chief Administrative Officer and General Manager of Accent Property Management, LLC**.

I am a proud graduate of the University of the Virgin Islands, where I earned both my Bachelor of Arts in Biology and my Master of Public Administration. I am also an active residential landlord and owner of two historic properties in Christiansted, St. Croix—one of which I restored from a derelict, long-neglected structure into a fully rehabilitated building now supporting both commercial and residential activity. Through that restoration process, I worked extensively with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs. Those experiences strengthened my understanding of regulatory processes, historic preservation, and the importance of sustained compliance. My background in science further shaped my approach to development: methodical, evidence-based, operationally sound, and grounded in environmental responsibility.

These combined experiences guide my work today as we seek to revitalize the Subbase properties in a manner that promotes sustainable growth, regulatory compliance, and long-term community benefit.

Property Overview

Bill No. 36-0199 concerns the long-term lease of Parcels 123 and 129 in Subbase, which together comprise more than 36,000 square feet of industrial-zoned land in one of St. Thomas's most important commercial corridors. The properties however, are currently in significant disrepair. The buildings require major rehabilitation, including roof replacement; electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and HVAC upgrades; interior reconstruction; and improvements to lighting, safety, and security.

Despite not yet receiving approval for this multiyear lease, Accent Property Management has already invested nearly $20,000 of our own capital to begin stabilizing the site. This work involved clearing extensive underbrush and accumulated debris, removing abandoned vehicles and equipment, restoring basic order, and securing the site to with a gate to prevent further unauthorized entry. These actions were necessary simply to make the property safe and accessible for proper assessment and demonstrate our readiness to proceed with full-scale redevelopment immediately upon approval.

Why This Development Is Urgently Needed

The timing of this redevelopment is critically important. The Territory is entering a multi-year, multi-billion-dollar post-disaster rebuilding phase, attracting national and international companies prepared to support reconstruction. Yet, as many of you know, the U.S. Virgin Islands lacks adequate industrial space to support the operational needs of these firms. Companies seeking to store building materials, equipment, supplies, and fabrication units struggle to find appropriate facilities. This shortage risks delaying reconstruction, increasing project costs, forcing companies to stage equipment offshore, and limiting opportunities for local contractors and employment.

Redeveloping these Subbase properties now will directly strengthen the Territory's capacity to support ongoing and future recovery work. By bringing over 36,000 square feet of industrial space back online, we can help ensure rebuilding efforts proceed more efficiently, more cost-effectively, and with greater local participation. This project aligns seamlessly with both the immediate needs of the Territory and its long-term economic recovery strategy.

Our Vision and Development Strategy

Accent Property Management views this redevelopment as a collaborative opportunity that benefits all parties. It allows the Government to retain ownership while receiving capital improvements and a tiered revenue-share. It provides the business community with much-needed industrial space for operations, staging, and logistical support. And it strengthens the broader Virgin Islands economy through increased local production, expanded workforce opportunities, and improvements to infrastructure resilience.

Our redevelopment strategy will unfold in three key phases. The first phase involves stabilizing and rehabilitating the buildings through essential improvements such as roof replacement, system upgrades, interior reconstruction, and bringing the structures into compliance with safety, lighting, and accessibility standards. The second phase focuses on modernizing and optimizing the site as a cohesive industrial campus by reorganizing the yard and parking areas, improving circulation for trucks and equipment, establishing dedicated zones for containers and material laydown, enhancing lighting and security systems, and upgrading the site's overall infrastructure. The third phase concentrates on attracting a strategic mix of tenants. The properties are ideally suited to support small manufacturers, fabrication and assembly operations, warehousing and logistics firms, skilled trades, service-sector support companies, and local entrepreneurs seeking scalable space. We are already engaged in discussions with prospective subtenants, lenders, and investors who recognize the significance and potential of this redevelopment.

Long-Term Benefits to the Territory

The long-term benefits of this project are far-reaching. It will create new jobs for Virgin Islanders, support post-disaster reconstruction efforts, expand local manufacturing capability, and strengthen the Territory's readiness for future storms and supply chain disruptions. It will also generate Government revenue through an escalating revenue-share structure and bring long-dormant public assets back into productive use. Restoring more than 36,000 square feet of industrial space at this critical time will provide meaningful economic value for years to come.

Closing

In closing, I want to reaffirm Accent Property Management's commitment to this project and to our partnership with the Government of the Virgin Islands. We have already invested our own resources because we believe in the potential of these properties and in the importance of this redevelopment for the Territory's recovery and future growth. The transformation of the Subbase parcels will not only revitalize deteriorated structures; it will provide essential support for the Territory's reconstruction, resilience, and long-term economic vitality.

We respectfully ask for your support of Bill No. 36-0199, and we look forward to working closely with the Government to unlock the full potential of these properties for the benefit of the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
