

The 36th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands
Committee on Budget, Appropriation and Finance

Bureau of Information Technology

Bill No. 36-0045



Presented by:
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1 Good day, Chairperson Novelle Francis, Jr., members of the Committee on Budget,
2 Appropriations and Finance, and other Senators. I am Rupert Ross, Director of the Bureau of
3 Information Technology and the Chief Information Officer for the Government of the Virgin
4 Islands. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding Bill No. 36-0045, which proposes
5 technological upgrades for the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission. As the Chief Information
6 Officer of the Virgin Islands, I appreciate the chance to share the operational realities and
7 the transformative potential this legislation represents.

8 The Taxicab Commission currently operates with a fully manual process, managed by a
9 small staff across two offices. All records, covering over 2,000 medallions and more than
10 4,000 lessee and operator files, are maintained in physical ledgers and file cabinets. This
11 manual approach leads to inefficiencies, errors, and significant challenges in tracking
12 medallion activity, processing transactions, and ensuring data integrity. The ability of the
13 Commission to serve the public and enforce regulations is hampered by outdated
14 recordkeeping and limited access to information. Integrating the Commission's operations
15 into a modern digital platform will address these challenges by digitizing all records, making
16 them accessible and secure, and automating key processes such as medallion issuance,
17 leasing, transfers, business licensing, badge renewals, and citation management. The
18 transition will also enable online customer interactions, reduce wait times, improve service,
19 and enhance reporting, compliance, and transparency for both staff and the public.
20 Furthermore, it will support integration with other government systems for payments and
21 regulatory checks.

22 Based on a thorough review of the Commission's operational scope and record volume, the
23 estimated cost for implementing a government-grade digital solution—including licensing,
24 data migration, process automation, staff training, and support—ranges from \$350,000 to
25 \$700,000 for the first year. The \$400,000 appropriation proposed in Bill No. 36-0045 is well-
26 aligned with the initial phase of this modernization effort, allowing for a scalable, phased
27 approach that prioritizes immediate operational improvements and future expansion. It is
28 important to note that future costs will be shaped by several factors. After the initial
29 implementation, ongoing expenses will include annual licensing fees for the digital platform,
30 continued technical support, system maintenance, and periodic upgrades to accommodate
31 new regulatory requirements or expanded functionality. These recurring costs are expected
32 to be lower than the initial investment, typically ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year,
33 depending on user volume, additional modules, and the level of support required. If the
34 Commission chooses to expand the system's capabilities, such as integrating with other
35 agencies or adding new services, there may be additional project costs, but these can be
36 planned and budgeted as part of a multi-year modernization roadmap.

Assisting the Commission in fulfilling these requirements through the Bureau of Information Technology's expertise aligns directly with our mission and capabilities. BIT has the technical resources, governance framework, and experience necessary to deliver secure, efficient, and sustainable solutions for government operations. Our role is to ensure that technology investments are implemented effectively, meet compliance standards, and provide long-term value to the people of the Virgin Islands.

Risks associated with this transition include the need for dedicated staff resources to support digitization, potential integration challenges with existing systems, and the importance of ongoing training and support. These risks will be addressed through careful planning, phased implementation, and continuous stakeholder engagement. Modernizing the Taxicab Commission's operations is essential for delivering efficient, transparent, and reliable services to medallion owners, operators, and the public. This investment will lay the foundation for future innovation and improved government service delivery across the Virgin Islands.

Bill No. 36-0045 represents a pivotal investment in the digital future of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission. We are prepared to deliver a secure, efficient, and user-friendly system that will benefit all stakeholders. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to share this vision for modernization.