



TESTIMONY ON BILL NO. _____
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
36th LEGISLATURE OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
MONDAY MAY 11, 2026
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Good day, Senate President Potter, honorable members of the 36th Legislature, members of the listening and viewing audience.

I am Alicia V. Barnes, Principal of Rittenhouse Consulting LLC. I appear before you today on behalf of our client, Mr. Earl Charles, to provide testimony in support of Bill No. _____, an act to amend Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-7 for St. Croix by rezoning Plot Nos. 242, 243, 563, and 564 Estate Strawberry Hill Quarter, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, from R-2 (Residential Low Density-One and Two Family) to R-4 (Residential Medium Density).

The subject properties consist of four contiguous parcels located in Estate Strawberry Hill, Christiansted, St. Croix. As the authorized representative for Mr. Charles in this matter, we respectfully request the Legislature's favorable consideration of this rezoning. The proposed rezoning is intended to facilitate responsible residential development that is consistent with the surrounding community and compatible with long-term growth objectives.

The proposed rezoning seeks to provide an appropriate residential density that supports future housing opportunities while maintaining respect for the existing neighborhood character and surrounding land uses. The proposed development will be compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood, where the nearest residence is situated approximately 30 feet away. It will also comply with all applicable R-4 zoning standards and regulatory requirements.

The primary objective of this rezoning is to facilitate the construction of a residential apartment building comprising six units. This development is a direct response to the chronic shortage of affordable rental housing on St. Croix. The project plans involve developing three of the four plots into a two-story sixplex residential complex, featuring four two-bedroom units and two one-bedroom units. Currently, two of the plots contain concrete structures, including a one-story home and storage, while the remaining two are vacant with existing vegetation. The project will connect to the public sewer system and the Water and Power Authority (WAPA) potable water system. Furthermore, the



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development will offer essential amenities such as high-speed internet, CCTV security, trash removal, and dedicated green space, with ten parking spaces provided on-site.

We have worked closely with the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning (CCZP) within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR). Based on our engagement, we are appreciative of the Department's favorable recommendation to rezone the properties from R-2 to R-4. We are committed to working collaboratively and transparently with all other applicable divisions of DPNR, neighboring property owners, and this honorable body throughout this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony today. We respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Bill No. _____ to help address the vital housing needs of our community. I am available to answer any questions the committee may have.