



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

4611 Tutu Park Mall  
Suite 300, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
St. Thomas, VI 00802  
(340) 774-3320

45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted  
St. Croix, VI 00840  
(340) 773-1082  
dpnr.vi.gov



June 26, 2026

Honorable Milton E. Potter  
President  
36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands  
Capitol Building  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

Re: Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. SJZ-1, Application No. CCZP0011-26

Good day Senate President Milton E. Potter, members of the 36th Legislature, legislative staff, and members of the public. My name is Leia LaPlace-Matthew, Territorial Planner with the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning (CCZP) within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR). I am here to present the department's recommendation on Zoning Map Amendment Application No. CCZP0011-26.

This petition, submitted by Maxentius Griffith and John D. Griffith, seeks to amend the zoning designation of Parcel No. 17-D-5, Estate Adrian, No. 18 Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John, from R-1 (Residential–Low Density) to B-3 (Business–Scattered). The purpose of the request is to establish a commercial trucking operation, including equipment storage facilities for a water delivery and construction support business.

The subject property consists of approximately 0.83 acres and is currently vacant, having been previously used for agricultural purposes. The surrounding area includes primarily residential zoning classifications, with adjacent vacant land to the north, south, and west, and a residential subdivision to the east.

DPNR has conducted a comprehensive review of the application, including an analysis of surrounding land use patterns, zoning history, project details, infrastructure capacity, public input, and consistency with the Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan.

The Department notes the following key findings:

- The surrounding area reflects a predominantly residential character, although prior rezonings and use variances have introduced some mixed uses over time. However, these approvals have contributed to a pattern of incremental encroachment rather than a coordinated land use strategy.
- The proposed project includes the development of a single story, three bay garage for the storage of water trucks, dump trucks, and heavy equipment, as well as a small administrative office. Operations would involve approximately six-to-eight trucks and four employees, with typical hours between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

- The site would rely on cistern water and an independent sewage disposal system, and includes proposed buffering, fencing, and stormwater management measures to mitigate impacts.

At the DPNR CCZP public hearing held on April 20, 2026, and through 22 written submissions, there was strong and unified public opposition to the proposed rezoning.

Key concerns raised by residents included:

- Incompatibility of heavy equipment storage and trucking operations within a residential neighborhood.
- Noise, traffic, fumes, and safety impacts associated with heavy vehicle activity.
- Strain on private estate roads not designed for commercial traffic.
- Negative effects on quality of life, property values, and neighborhood character.
- Concerns regarding spot zoning and precedent for further commercial encroachment.
- Inconsistency with the Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan, particularly policies protecting residential areas on St. John.

The Department carefully evaluated the request against the 2024 Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan. The Comp Plan establishes a clear policy direction to discourage ad hoc rezonings and explicitly emphasizes “No More Spot Zoning” as a guiding principle.

The proposed rezoning would convert a single residential parcel to a commercial designation within a residential subdivision without a broader planning context, which is inconsistent with the Comp Plan’s requirement that zoning changes occur through coordinated, area wide planning efforts.

Additionally, the St. John specific policies of the Comp Plan emphasize protection of established residential communities, recognition of limited infrastructure capacity, and concentration of commercial and service industrial uses within designated commercial or mixed-use areas, rather than through piecemeal rezoning of residential land.

Service industrial uses such as trucking operations and equipment storage are intended to be located in planned and appropriately zoned areas where land use compatibility, infrastructure, and access can be addressed comprehensively. The introduction of such use within a residential neighborhood is inconsistent with both territorial and island specific planning policy.

After thorough analysis of the applicant’s request, the surrounding land uses, public input, and applicable planning policies, the Department finds that the proposed rezoning constitutes spot zoning, is incompatible with the surrounding residential area, and is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan. Accordingly, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends denial of Application No. CCZP0011-26.

Pursuant to Title 29, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238, the report of the Planning Office regarding this proposal, including the detailed basis for our recommendation, is incorporated into the record submitted prior to this Committee of the Whole Hearing. We respectfully request that the PowerPoint presentation for CCZP0011-26 now be displayed.