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TESTIMONY ON BILL NO.
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
36TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Good day, Senate President Potter, honorable members of the 36th Legislature, members of the listening and viewing audience.

I am Alicia V. Barnes, the Principal of Rittenhouse Consulting LLC, a regional environmental and business development consulting firm, specializing in permitting, re-zonings, and regulatory compliance. I appear before you on behalf of our client, Stonehouse Junction LLC, to provide testimony in support of Bill No._____, an act to amend the Official Zoning Map SCZ-7 for St. Croix, by rezoning Parcel No.1 Mount Welcome, East End Quarter, Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, changing the zoning designation of the property from W-2 (Waterfront) to B-2 (Business-Secondary).

Stonehouse Junction LLC is owned by the Hamed family, whose business enterprises include but are not limited to The Market, Moe's Fresh Market, and the Hibiscus Beach Hotel. The Hamed family has consistently demonstrated their commitment to the Virgin Islands community through charitable donations and in-kind contributions to numerous local non-profit organizations over the years and direct employment of over 450 employees. The proposed re-zoning intends to facilitate the responsible development and construction of a hotel that is consistent with surrounding land uses. The proposed development will enhance St. Croix's tourism product by increasing the hotel room inventory.

We consulted with the Division of Comprehensive Coastal Zone Planning (CCZP) within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) and are appreciative of their favorable recommendation to re-zone the parcel from W-2 (Waterfront) to B-2 (Business Secondary).

We respectfully request your favorable consideration of Bill No._____ and stand ready to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony today.