GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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November 9, 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. SCZ-11, Application No. CCZP0055-26

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. CCZP0055-26.

This application, submitted by the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), seeks to amend the zoning designation of Parcel Nos. 5-A and 5-C VI Corp Land (Estate Castle Burke), Prince Quarter, St. Croix, from A-1 (Agricultural Zone) to P (Public). The purpose of the request is to bring the St. Croix Educational Complex High School and Career and Technical Education Center (SCEC-CTEC) into zoning conformity with its existing public educational use.

DPNR has conducted a thorough review of the application, including an analysis of the surrounding land use, zoning trends, infrastructure availability, and public input. The surrounding area includes vacant land to the north and west, a residential neighborhood to the east, and the University of the Virgin Islands Albert A. Sheen Campus to the south. The area is primarily zoned A-1, B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood), and P.

The Department notes the following key findings:

- The subject parcels encompass the existing St. Croix Educational Complex High School and Career and Technical Education Center, which have operated at this location for many years and serve an important public function by providing secondary and vocational educational opportunities to residents of St. Croix.
- Public infrastructure is available, with existing public water and sewer lines serving the property. No additional DPNR division reviews are required.
- At the DPNR-CCZP public hearing held on July 23, 2026, concerns were raised regarding potential impacts to the residential neighborhood located east of the site. The applicant stated that no demolition is proposed and that repairs and renovations will be limited to building interiors. The modernization project is not expected to have physical impacts on neighboring properties. No post-hearing public comments were received.
- The application does not propose a change in use, expansion of operations, or the introduction of incompatible development. Rather, it corrects an inconsistency between the property's longstanding governmental use and its zoning designation.

- Section 229(q) of the Virgin Islands Zoning Code provides that property owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands should be classified within the P-Public zoning district. The requested rezoning would bring the property's zoning into conformity with both its ownership and use.
- The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the 2024 Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan and promotes orderly development, regulatory consistency, and sound land-use planning.
- The rezoning will not increase development intensity, alter the character of the surrounding area, or create adverse impacts on neighboring properties, public infrastructure, or environmental resources.
- The educational complex is compatible with nearby residential and vacant lands and has become an established community asset providing essential educational services to the territory.

After thorough analysis of the applicant's request, the surrounding uses, and the existing public institutional character of the site, the Department finds the proposed rezoning to be consistent with the Comprehensive Land and Water Plan and appropriate for bringing the property into zoning conformity. The Department recommends approval of the zoning map amendment request to change Parcel Nos. 5-A and 5-C VI Corp Land (Estate Castle Burke), Prince Quarter, St. Croix, from A-1 (Agricultural) to P (Public).

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238, the report of the Planning Office regarding this proposal, including the detailed reasons for our recommendation, is incorporated into the records submitted prior to this Committee of the Whole Hearing. We respectfully request that the PowerPoint presentation for CCZP0055-26 now be displayed.

This concludes the testimony on behalf of the Department, and we are available to answer any questions.