



United States Virgin Islands

Bureau of Corrections

2024

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Presented for :
Testimony on Bill No. 35-0259

Presented by :
Peter Abrahams, Assistant Director, Support Services

***35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Committee of the Whole
Statement on behalf of Director Wynn Timermark***

Good afternoon, Chairman and Senate President Novelle E. Francis Jr, esteemed members of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, and the listening and viewing audiences. I am Peter Abrahams, Assistant Director, Support Services testifying on behalf of Wynn Timermark, Director of the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections and I am honored to provide this testimony in strong support of Bill No. 35-0259, which proposes to amend the zoning designation of Plots No. 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, and 109 Estate Nisky (Subbase), St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, from C (Commercial) to P (Public) zoning.

This zoning amendment is not merely a technical adjustment but a critical step towards aligning our community's development with strategic goals of the Government of the Virgin Islands through the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Department of Property and Procurement. As stewards of public interest, it is our responsibility to ensure that land use decisions contribute positively to the social, economic, and environmental well-being of our constituents. The conversion of these plots to Public (P) zoning will facilitate the establishment of essential public facilities and amenities, such as a correctional institution currently located in the vicinity of the plots. Such developments are pivotal in enhancing the quality of life for residents and ensuring equitable access to services across our island. Moreover, public zoning encourages sustainable infrastructure development. It integrates environmental considerations into urban planning practices, promoting energy efficiency, water conservation, and green spaces that mitigate the impacts of urbanization on our natural environment.

This proposed zoning amendment adheres to the legal framework governing land use planning in the Virgin Islands. It reflects extensive consultation with stakeholders, including environmental and planning experts, ensuring that the amendment aligns with the broader aspirations and needs of our community. Also, amidst the challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation, the designation of these plots for public use under P zoning signifies our commitment to environmental stewardship. It provides a platform to implement resilient infrastructure and adaptive strategies that safeguard our natural resources and enhance our community's resilience to climate-related risks.

In conclusion, I urge the Committee to support Bill No. 35-0259. This amendment represents a proactive step towards fostering sustainable development, promoting public welfare, and ensuring that our land use framework are in harmony with the evolving needs of our community. By approving this amendment, we pave the way for a future where St. Thomas thrives as a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient island.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am available to provide further information or address any questions that may arise.