

The Capitol Building
Charlotte Amalie, United States Virgin Islands 00802
340.774.0880

Golden Rock
Christiansted, United States Virgin Islands 00820
340.773.2424

St. John Annex
Cruz Bay, United States Virgin Islands 00830
340.776.6285



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Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning


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Committee on Culture, Sports, Parks, and Youth
Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection

MILTON E. POTTER

Senator, 35th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands

TO: Kurell Hodge, J.D.

FROM: Milton E. Potter 

DATE: April 4, 2024

SUBJECT: June 3, 2024 Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning Committee Report

The attached report of the Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning is submitted pursuant to the Rules of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

COMMITTEE REPORT – Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning: June 3, 2024

The Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning was called to order at 10:07am by Committee Chairman, Senator Milton Potter. The meeting was held in the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Chambers on St. Thomas, VI to consider the following:

BLOCK I:

The Committee received an overall update on the Department of Planning & Natural Resources. Topics to be discuss included, but were not limited to: Potable Drinking Water Replacement lines funding, a status update on the Comprehensive Land & Water Use Plan, the relocation of the department to its permanent home in the SubBase/Crown Bayarea, projects the department has undertaken or plan to undertake, the status of those projects, and any impediments the department has encountered.

INVITED TESTIFIERS:

The Honorable Jean Pierre Oriol
Commissioner, Virgin Islands Department of Planning & Natural Resources

BLOCK II :

The Committee will receive an update from to the VI Department of Education. Topics to be discussed may include, but not be limited to the Department's planned, ongoing, and completed projects, as well the status of all disaster related federal funding designated for the department. Additionally the committee will receive an update as to any challenges pertaining to the department's role in the territory's disaster recovery efforts.

INVITED TESTIFIERS:

The Honorable Dionne Wells-Hedrington
Commissioner, Virgin Islands Department of Education

Committee Members in attendance:

Senator Diane T. Capehart
Senator Alma Francis Heyliger
Senator Kenneth L. Gittens
Senator Marise C. James
Senator Franklin D. Johnson
Senator Carla J. Joseph
Senator Milton E. Potter

Non-Committee Members that attended

Senator Ray Fonseca
Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory
Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

Public Affairs / Media:

Omari Hicks
Chaunte Herbert
Jonelle Jackson
Melissa Gustave
Alwyn Baptiste
Winston Nugent
Alvin Burke
Bernard Matthew
Eustace Browne
Barry Leerdam
Africah Harrigan
Jamal Potter

Clerked by: Pauline Dawes

Reporters: Joanne Samuel
Trecia Sealey
Vashti Berry
Nadine Williams
Nataya Melchior-Munoz

Sergeant-At-Arms/Security: Terrence Manning, Jr.

Commissioner Oriol provided an overall update on the Department of Planning & Natural Resources. Topics he discussed included: potable drinking water replacement lines, the relocation of the department to its permanent home in the SubBase/Crown Bay area, various projects underway at the territory's various libraries, marine moorings, as well as the Hull Bay dock replacement.

The Committee then conducted a 7-minute round of questions and discussions.

In the second Block of the day's agenda, Commissioner Dionne Wells-Hedrington provided an update on the Department of Education. Topics she discussed included the Department's planned, ongoing, and completed projects, as well as impediments the department has encountered in its efforts to get various projects started, plans for restructuring school populations to represent changes in the population of the territory. Commissioner Wells-Hedrington was accompanied by Chaneel Callwood, VI Department of Education Architect, and lead on all disaster recovery projects.

The Committee then conducted a 7-minute round of questions and discussion

Senator Milton E. Potter adjourned the meeting at 4:39pm