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**CHAIRMAN**  
**Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning**

**VICE CHAIR**  
Committee on Rules and Judiciary


**MEMBER**  
Committee on Health, Hospitals, and Human Services  
Committee on Culture, Sports, Parks, and Youth  
Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection

## **MILTON E. POTTER**

Senator, 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands

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**TO:** Kurell Hodge, J.D.

**FROM:** Milton E. Potter 

**DATE:** November 29, 2023

**SUBJECT:** November 6, 2023 Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning Committee Report

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

### **COMMITTEE REPORT – Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning: November 6, 2023**

The Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure, and Planning was called to order at 9:37am by Committee Chairman, Senator Milton Potter. The meeting was held in the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Chambers on St. Thomas, VI.

**Committee Members in attendance:**  
Senator Diane T. Capehart  
Senator Alma Francis Heyliger (Tardy)  
Senator Kenneth L. Gittens  
Senator Maries L. James  
Senator Franklin D. Johnson (Tardy)  
Senator Carla J. Joseph  
Senator Milton E. Potter

**Committee Member Excused:**

Senator Diane T. Capehart

**Non-Committee Members that attended**

Senator Marvin A. Blyden

Senator Ray Fonseca

Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff

**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

**Counsel:** Amos Carty, Jr.

**Reporters:** Nadine Williams, Tricia Sealey, Joanne Samuel

**Sergeant-At-Arms/Security:** Alphonso Boyce, Shani Smith, and Terrance Manning

In BLOCK I, the committee received an update on and discussed the current status of the Virgin Islands' disaster recovery efforts, specifically those relating to the Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery and the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority. Topics discussed included, but were not limited to planned, in-process, and completed projects; the status of all federal and local funding identified for the agencies' projects, as well as any impediments with respect to the agencies' role in the territory's disaster recovery efforts.

Ms. Dayna Clendinen, Acting Director of the Office of Disaster Recovery gave her opening statement. Mrs. Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Director of the Office of Disaster Recovery, gave her opening statement. The Committee then conducted a six-minute round of questioning. At the conclusion of the first round of questioning, the committee went directly into a two-minute round of questioning.

Additional staff from the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority that appeared along with Interem Executive Director Clendinen and answered questions were: Royan Robinson, Deputy Director of Finance; Ann Hanley, Director of Programs; Verlene Marcellin-Constable, Senior Infrastructure Program Manager; Alanah Lavinier, Director of Compliance and Regulatory Services; Yeisan Matthew, Director of Mitigation; Odari Thomas, Director of Energy Solutions for MIT and Electrical Grid; Jamillie Perez, Mitigation Deputy Director of Housing; Rupert Pelle, Chief Engineer; Rick Grant, Senior Project Manager; Donnie Dorsett, Economic Revitalization Senior Program Manager; Gregory Miller III, EnVIsion Senior Program Manager; Janine Hector, Director of Federal Programs; Nichole Johnson, Rental Properties Manager; and Mone't Francis-Gardner, ARPA Grant Administrator.

Additional staff from the Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery that appeared along with Director Williams-Octalien were: Artra S. Watlington-Francis, Deputy Director of Finance and Compliance, Malinda K. Vigilant-Messer, Territorial Public Assistance Officer, and Graciela Rivera, Territorial Hazard Mitigation Officer.

In Block II, the committee received an update on and discussed the current status of the Virgin Islands' disaster recovery efforts, specifically those relating to the Virgin Islands Department of Education. Topics discussed included, but were not limited to planned, in-process, and completed projects; the status of all federal and local funding identified for the department's projects, as well as any impediments with respect to the department's role in the territory's disaster recovery efforts.

The Honorable Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Education gave her opening testimony. Following her testimony, the committee conducted a seven-minute round of questioning. The committee followed with a two-minute round of questioning. The team from the Virgin islands Office of Disaster Recovery that participated in BLOCK I also participated in the BLOCK II discussion.

Additional Staff from the VI Department of Education that appeared along with Commissioner Well-Hedrington were: Victor Somme III, Assistant Commissioner, and Chaneel Callwood, VIDE Architect.

Senator Milton E. Potter adjourned the meeting at 4:12pm