COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

BILL NO. 35-0257

Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

April 10, 2024	

An Act to develop and produce an annual U.S. Virgin Islands Beer, Wine, and Spirits Festival

PROPOSED BY: Senator Diane T. Capehart 1 WHEREAS, beer, wine, and spirits festivals represent the largest gathering of alcoholic 2 beverages to promote collections of beverages; 3 WHEREAS, through public tasting events coupled with private competition activities, 4 these events draw large crowds to regions all over the world; 5 WHEREAS, festivals, in general, bring communities together, foster local and national 6 pride, and celebrate diversity; 7 WHEREAS, beer, wine, and spirits festivals generate significant economic growth for 8 small and large businesses alike, tourism and other sectors, including hotels, restaurants, 9 transportation services, and clothing stores, increasing the gross domestic product of the 10 destination: 11 WHEREAS, in 2019, festivals attracted an audience of over 896,000; 12 WHEREAS, the average festival enthusiast attends 2.7 festivals per year; 13 WHEREAS, in 2014, 32 million people attended at least one United States music 14 festival;

1	WHEREAS, beer, wine, and spirits festivals contribute to the growth and development
2	of the destination's local music industry;
3	WHEREAS, beer, wine, and spirits festivals have proven to be an effective and impactful
4	tool for promoting tourism and attracting visitors to travel to destinations worldwide;
5	WHEREAS, beer, wine, and spirits festivals provide a platform for local artists to
6	showcase their talents and gain exposure, providing them with significant marketing and
7	promotional opportunities;
8	WHEREAS, beer, wine, and spirits festivals have the potential to place the Virgin Islands
9	on the global stage;
10	WHEREAS, the success of previous festivals in the Virgin Islands such as the St. Croix
11	Jazz Festival and Sinbad's Soul Beer, Wine, and Spirits Festival demonstrated the potential for
12	a larger-scale, official beer, wine, and spirits festival;
13	WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands has a rich culture expressed through our vibrant local
14	music scene, worthy of being showcased and celebrated through festivals that promote large
15	gatherings;
16	WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands can benefit from the economic impact of a beer, wine,
17	and spirits festival, which can generate significant revenue for local businesses, including
18	hotels, restaurants, transportation services, and retail establishments;
19	WHEREAS, several Caribbean destinations that compete with the Virgin Islands for
20	visitor arrivals have developed large-scale gathering opportunities such as beer, wine, and
21	spirits festivals, food festivals, and major entertainment concerts, and the territory is without
22	such a powerful economic driver;
23	WHEREAS, the absence of a major beer, wine, and spirits festival in the Virgin Islands
24	puts the destination at a disadvantage compared to other jurisdictions and Caribbean
25	destinations;

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands is fully equipped with the expertise necessary to produce,
market, and promote a beer, wine, and spirits festival to distinction, including venue and audiovisual capacity, and event production service providers with significant experience developing
major music events;

WHEREAS, the creation of an annual beer, wine, and spirits festival in the Virgin Islands
will contribute to the growth of the local economy, increase tourism, and enhance the

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

destination's global reputation as a tourist destination; Now, Therefore,

SECTION 1. No later than 60 days after the enactment of this act, the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism shall issue an Invitation to Bid for the development, creation, and production of an annual "U.S. Virgin Islands Beer, Wine, and Spirits Festival" on the island of St. Croix that encompasses a vast array of beers, wines, and spirits. The contractor, in conjunction with the Department of Tourism, Division of Festivals, shall, not later than July 2025, hold the inaugural U.S. Virgin Islands Beer, Wine, and Spirits Festival.

SECTION 2. In addition to any other requirements for bids the Division of Festivals may establish for proposals requested under section 1, all bids must provide not less than \$1,000,000 or 20% of actual festival production costs in cash or value-in-kind sponsorships, whichever is greater.

19 <u>BILL SUMMARY</u>

Section 1 of this bill requires the Department of Tourism to issue an Invitation for Bids to develop, create, and produce an annual "U.S. Virgin Islands Beer, Wine, Spirits Festival" on St. Croix and requires the inaugural festival to be held by July 2025. Section 2 of this bill requires that all bids provide not less than \$1,000,000 or 20% of actual festival production costs in cash or value-in-kind sponsorships, whichever is greater.

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