



**Government of the Virgin Islands
of the United States of America
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs**

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**Horace Graham
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**Testimony
Before the
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands**

**Honorable Javan E. James, Sr., Chair
Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture**

Act 8680

September 11, 2024

"Serving Businesses & Assisting, Educating and Protecting Consumers"

Good day, Senator Javan E. James, Sr., Chair of the Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture, esteemed members of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, committee members present, non-committee members in attendance, and the distinguished listening and viewing audience.

My name is Horace Graham, Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (hereinafter referred to as “DLCA”).

Thank you for affording DLCA the opportunity to testify before the 35th Legislature on the implementation of Act 8680, which established the Office of Cannabis Regulation (OCR).

Act 8680 amended Title 19 VIC by adding chapter 34A to expand the legalization of cannabis from medicinal use to include adult use cannabis and provides for the promulgation of rules and regulations related to the cultivation, manufacture, sale, dispensary, testing, licensing and the prescriptive and sacramental use of cannabis; the licensure and issuance of permits to cultivate, manufacture, dispense, research and develop, testing, adult use, temporary use, and consumption; the creation of medical cannabis certifications forms, medical cannabis registry and medical cannabis patient cards; and a verification system.

DLCA has been actively providing comprehensive support to OCR in its critical developmental phase. This support has included, but is not limited to, administrative

assistance, the provision of office space, fiscal management, and the oversight of human resource acquisitions. Specifically, the DLCA has played a key role in the following areas:

Charge Codes and Collections: The DLCA has assisted OCR in working with the Department of Finance to finalize and implement a system charge codes for the organizing collections, ensuring transparency and accountability in the financial operations of the OCR.

Revision of Personnel Requisition Forms: Personnel Requisition Forms were revised and updated the for all enforcement positions within the OCR, ensuring they align with regulatory standards and accurately reflect the operational needs of the Office.

Human Resource Support: The DLCA facilitated the recruitment process by assisting with the interview and hiring of an office assistant for the OCR, a crucial role that has already began to see benefits in facilitating the daily operations of the Office.

Fiscal Responsibilities: In addition to our administrative and human resource efforts, the DLCA has assisted with processing payments received from medicinal cannabis patients and providers, a task that is ongoing and essential to the financial stability of the program.

Licensing Application Process Support: One of the key areas where the DLCA continues to provide assistance is in the implementation of a mechanism for accepting and processing license applications. Recognizing the importance of a smooth and efficient licensing process, the DLCA is assisting the OCR in identifying a strategic partner to

implement an interim system. This system will facilitate the receipt and evaluation of the initial set of license applications, allowing the OCR to expedite the licensing process.

The DLCA remains committed to its role as a partner in the establishment and ongoing support of the cannabis industry in the United States Virgin Islands. We recognize the importance of a well-regulated and efficiently managed industry and will continue to provide the necessary support to ensure the success of the OCR.

In conclusion, the DLCA is grateful for the opportunity to provide testimony outlining our extensive support for the OCR. We fully recognize the critical role that the OCR plays in the successful establishment of the cannabis industry in the United States Virgin Islands, and we are committed to continuing our partnership to ensure the smooth implementation of regulatory processes.

Our collaborative efforts, including our work on the mechanism for processing and evaluating initial license applications, reflect the DLCA's dedication to helping the OCR meet its objectives efficiently. By assisting in these foundational tasks, we are helping to pave the way for the long-anticipated launch of the cannabis industry, bringing economic growth and opportunity to our territory.

The DLCA remains steadfast in its support, and we stand ready to continue providing the resources and expertise necessary for the OCR's ongoing success. We welcome any questions this Body may have and look forward to our continued

collaboration as we advance the shared goals of responsible regulation and economic development in the United States Virgin Islands.