



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

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**H. Nathalie Hodge
Commissioner Nominee**

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

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

To provide an update on the Implementation of Act 8680, etc.

September 13, 2023

"Serving Businesses & Assisting, Educating and Protecting Consumers"

Good Day Honorable Senator Javan James, Committee Chair, Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, committee Senators present, non-committee Senators present, and the listening and viewing audience.

My name is H. Nathalie Hodge, Commissioner Nominee for the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (hereinafter referred to as “DLCA”). Today, I am accompanied by Dr. Catherine Kean, M.D., Chair of the Cannabis Advisory Board, and Ms. Hannah Carty, Executive Director of the Office of Cannabis Regulation.

Thank you for providing DLCA with the opportunity to testify before the 35th Legislature on the following items:

1. Implementation of Act 8680;
2. Status update on the necessary personnel to carry out the duties of the Office of Cannabis Regulations;
3. Path moving forward for the implementation of the medicinal and adult recreational cannabis industry;
4. Discussion on the licensing procedures for the cannabis industry.

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 stands ready to provide the Office of Cannabis Regulations assistance it needs to ensure it's success. Currently, the DLCA business office provides the OCR with administrative support. Specifically, assists by providing office space, fiscal management, human resources supervision, and everything in between.

Executive Director Carty and I have a standing weekly meeting to address any issues and/or concerns that arise and to keep each other abreast of ongoing developments with the OCR. The DLCA is and shall continuously assist the OCR to ensure the success of the cannabis industry in the United States Virgin Islands. Executive Director Carty will provide greater detail in her testimony.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these amendments. We stand ready to answer any questions this Body may have.