



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

-----0-----
VIRGIN ISLANDS TAXICAB COMMISSION

3274 Richmond, St. Croix, USVI 00820
8201 Subbase Suite 1, St. Thomas, USVI 00802-5813

Tel: (340)773-1561 Ext. 5235
Tel: (340) 693-4211 Fax: (340) 693-4212

Loretta Lloyd
Chairperson of the Board

Elizabeth Hansen Watley
Vice-Chairperson of the Board

Myrna S. George
Secretary of the Board

Vernice M. Gumbs
Acting Executive Director

**TESTIMONY OF
VERNICE M. GUMBS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
VIRGIN ISLANDS TAXICAB COMMISSION**

**Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs,
and Consumer Protection
May 31, 2023**

Thank you, Chairperson Carla Joseph, and members of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, & Consumer Protection, for inviting me to speak before your committee today.

My name is Vernice M. Gumbs, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission (VITCC). Appearing with me today are members of the VITCCs Board. Today I will provide an overview of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission primarily from an administrative standpoint.

First and foremost, the offices of the Taxicab Commission on the islands of St. Thomas and St. John are currently shuttered due to environmental issues. It was necessary to close the agency as to protect the health and safety of the employees during the testing, remediation, cleaning, removal of contaminated furniture, and

sanitization of the office. Understandably, this closure has been very challenging on the part of our automobile-for-hire industry, stakeholders, management, and staff, as we were only able to provide limited services through our partnership with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Thank you, Director McIntosh, Assistant Director LaFond, and the DMV staff for your assistance on behalf of our automobile-for-hire operators.

VITCC has been and will continue to remain committed to our automobile-for-hire industry, stakeholders, management, and staff. Presently, we are working on building out the office with surplus furniture from the GVI and look forward with great anticipation to reopening our doors on Monday, June 5th, 2023, at 8:00 am for normal business operations. We thank all persons who made it possible and more importantly, we humbly extend a heartfelt thank you for your understanding and patience while we worked through the environmental safety concerns of all persons who conduct business and work within our office structure located in Subbase on the island of St. Thomas.

Secondly, while VITCC is in an unfortunate and precarious situation on the islands of St. Thomas and St. John, our St. Croix office has remained fully operational servicing our St. Croix constituents. Sadly, VITCC has been lacking and continues to lack the technological infrastructure which would have allowed us to provide services to our constituents in real time. Upon my employment with this agency, this is one of the areas I was able to identify as critical for the continuity of

operations in real time. The goal of the Commission is to improve its day-to-day operations ensuring that consumers are provided safe, reliable, consistent, and professional transportation by our automobile-for-hire operators who are the first to meet and most often the last to interact with the visitors to our beautiful islands. To achieve this goal, the Commission is prioritizing its plans to fully automate our operations including the establishment of a database of all automobile-for-hire medallion owners, licenses, and vehicles. The proposal includes automating key functions, especially enforcement activities, and the ability to make payments online. We also anticipate establishing an Electronic Mail and file sharing system as well as upgrading our website so that we may provide increased education to the public regarding our functions, procedures, and activities. While I am diligently working to have the first phase of this project rolled out by early summer, funding remains a challenge.

Thirdly, I have been faced with the lack of involvement and job performance by employees. It is challenging to work as a team when everyone does not put his/her best foot forward. A territorial assessment has revealed that in recent years employees in the St. Croix office have consistently worked to ensure daily revenues are inputted into the GVI-ERP System, maintained an updated medallion registry database, provide monthly reports, respond to complaints timely and issue citations etc., while the employees in the St. Thomas office which also services St. John have failed to maintain an accurate/updated medallion registry database, ensure daily revenues were entered into the GVI-ERP System and provide monthly

reports, respond to complaints timely, if at all, and issue citations. As a result, I have no recourse but to review the hard copy medallion owner/operator file folders before approving any transaction(s), hold each employee accountable for his/her respective duties and issue verbal and written warnings due to insubordination. The Agency is currently undergoing a long overdue audit by the Inspector General's Office.

Since accepting my employment as the Assistant Executive Director, Acting Executive Director and now Executive Director, I have appeared before the legislative body on multiple occasions and indicated that VITCC welcomes constructive input from each and every one of our legislators as we diligently work to bring the Commission technologically into the 21st century, increase our enforcement unit and ensure that our automobile-for-hire industry remain competitive in an evolving marketplace. This is the last local business standing and it's imperative that we protect and preserve their investments.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to present an overview of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission.

#####