

35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands

Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and  
Consumer Protection

November 21, 2023

Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall

Charlotte Amalie, Virgin Islands

Office of the Lieutenant Governor's Testimony

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Good morning, Committee Chairperson the Honorable Carla J. Joseph, and the Honorable Members of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer Protection, and other Senators present today as well as the viewing and listening audiences.

I am Denise Johannes, Director of the Division of Corporations and Trademarks for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, which is under the leadership of the Honorable Tregenza A. Roach, Esq. I appear before you today, to present testimony on Bill No. 35-0084 – An Act amending Title 11, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 21, Section 1213 to allow businesses operating under a trade name to have the option of renewing the trade name every 2-, 6-, or 10-years intervals, that is sponsored by Senator Alma Francis Heyliger.

Today, I am accompanied in the Legislature's Chambers by Nadja Harrigan, Esq., Legal Counsel to the Lieutenant Governor and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and Laura Bedminster, Assistant Director of the Division of Corporations and Trademarks.

The Lieutenant Governor and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor are neither for or against Bill No. 35-0084 for trade name owners to have the option of renewing their trade name every 2-, 6-, or 10-years intervals, however, we are concerned that there will be a cost to implement this change if the bill is passed. In accordance with the requirements contained in the existing statute, the Division's online Catalyst system is currently coded to allow trade name owners to renew their registration every two (2) years. Our system contractor estimates that it will take two hundred (200) hours to implement the proposed change in renewal intervals at a cost of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00). Therefore, we kindly request that funding be appropriated to cover the cost of the changes necessary for the Catalyst system to accommodate the proposed changes should this bill become law. We further request a delayed effective date for the implementation of the changes to allow the system contractor to update the Catalyst coding and the staff of the Division of Corporations and Trademarks to perform user acceptance testing for the changes.

The proposed change will affect over Six Thousand Eight Hundred Seven (6,807) trade name registrations that are on file with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Trade name owners and filers currently receive and will continue to receive electronic email reminders of their upcoming renewal due dates which aids the Office of the Lieutenant Governor with the collection of the renewal fees that generate revenue for the Government of the Virgin Islands.

Madam Chairperson, I conclude my testimony relative to Bill No. 35-0084 – An Act amending Title 11, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 21, Section 1213 to allow businesses operating under a trade name to have the option of renewing the trade name every 2-, 6-, or 10-years intervals. We are prepared to receive any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to come before this body to submit my presentation.