

**Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs  
and Consumer Protection  
35th Legislature of The Virgin Islands  
Bureau of Motor Vehicles Testimony on Bill 35-0230  
Monday, May 20, 2024**

Senator Carla Joseph, Chair of the Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Protection, other Senators present, testifiers, the listening and viewing audience. My name is Barbara Jackson-McIntosh, and I am the Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. I appreciate the opportunity given to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to appear before the committee to offer our testimony on Bill 35-0230; an Act repealing section 11 of Act No. 6570, as amended, and amending Title 20 Virgin Islands Code related to the inspection and licensing of automobiles for hire.

I agree with the proposed amendments in principle, however, there are two items that I believe should be addressed to provide clarity and address the issue of public safety.

1-Safari as per the definition is a truck that has been modified. A vehicle that is modified as per the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety standard must be modified by a final stage manufacturer. The final-stage manufacturer must affix a label that identifies the manufacturer, states the vehicle's Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR), Gross Axle Weight Rating (GAWR), vehicle type classification, and VIN, and identifies the vehicle's date of final manufacture (month and year). The label must also contain one of the following three alternative certification statements certifying that the vehicle conforms to all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and Bumper and Theft Prevention Standards, if applicable.

This very important safety act should not be subjective but should be codified in the interest of public safety. Second stage manufacturer certification requires the persons or businesses that modifies vehicles to register with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration online, a certification number is emailed to the applicant as soon as the application is submitted. The Virgin Islands should also add that these manufacturers must be certified welders.

2-The other item is to clarify the definition of a surrey. A surrey is defined in this amendment; however, the definition only addresses the carriage. The definition should have added that the surrey includes the medium by which the carriage is propelled such as a motorized, non-motorized or other mode of transportation.

Title 20 VIC, Act 6635, Act 6570, Act 6595, and there may be other areas in the law where “tour bus type” vehicles are mentioned, however; there is no definition of tour-bus type vehicles in the VI Code, neither is it clear whether these vehicles are regulated by the Taxi Commission or the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs. We believe that a comprehensive review of the laws pertaining to the regulation of automobiles for hire should be done with all stakeholders at the table. The rest of the world is not waiting on us to define vehicles for hire, neither are they waiting on us to determine who should oversee the different aspects of the industry; while we are amending and amending legislation based on events and circumstances, the rest of the world is moving full speed ahead with measurable results in their transportation and tourism industries.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles will continue to work with all stakeholders as we strive to ensure that the safety of the public is at the forefront of our goals and objectives.