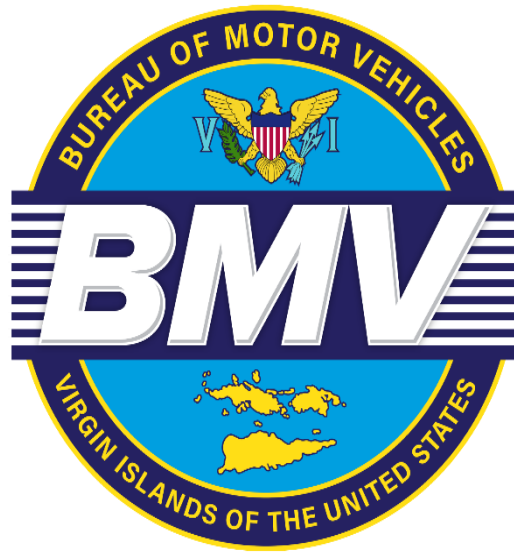


The 35th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands
Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer
Protection

Bureau of Motor Vehicles Testimony on Bill 35-0231
Tuesday September 23, 2024



Presented by:
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Director
Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Good afternoon, Honorable Senator Carla J. Joseph,
Chair of the Committee on Government
Operations, Veterans Affairs, and Consumer
Protection, other members of the Committee, the
listening and viewing audience. I am Barbara Jackson-
McIntosh, Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, I
apologize for not being able to attend the hearing today
because I have a prior planned pressing matter that I
must address.

1

2 Through this correspondence I offer opposition on behalf of the
3 Bureau of Motor Vehicles, to the proposed amendment to Title
4 20, Virgin Islands Code, part II, Chapter 32, subchapter 1, section
5 225c, relating to the requirements for vehicles brought into the
6 territory.

7

8 The purpose of the previous amendment to this section of Title 20
9 was to include a provision to hold the responsible parties
10 accountable for notifying the BMV, when a vehicle is transported
11 in and out of the territory or between the islands. The addition of
12 the new subsection 225c requires that a Special Permit be
13 obtained from the BMV so that vehicles brought into the Virgin
14 Islands can be driven from the shipping company to the BMV.
15 Prior to the addition of section 225c, we were told by law
16 enforcement and the public that there were several vehicles on the
17 roadway that were not registered in the territory, some were
18 driving around with license plates from other states. Since the
19 enactment and implementation of this provision of Title 20, we
20 have seen a drastic reduction in the number of vehicles that are
21 released to the owner without insurance, payment of road tax,
22 obtaining a VI Title and registration. Section 225c allows the

1 BMV to enter all vehicles imported into the territory in the BMV
2 database even before the title and registration process have been
3 completed; through the information that is entered into the
4 database, law enforcement is aware of the status of the vehicle,
5 and the communication between the owner and the BMV.

6
7 Removing the provision that provides for immediate
8 communication with the BMV is indeed a step backwards for
9 enforcement. If a vehicle owner chooses not to come back to the
10 BMV after they received the Special Permit, at least law
11 enforcement will know who owns the vehicle by searching the
12 database using the vin number. This amendment is removing this
13 important tool not only from law enforcement, but from all
14 citizens who will need to know if the vehicle is involved in an
15 accident and God forbid the accident resulted in death or major
16 injuries, or if the vehicle is abandoned on private property or the
17 public roadway.

18
19 Requiring the dealers to self-report ten (10) days later, maybe ten
20 (10) days too late and circumvent a necessary step in the process.
21 The current protection benefits all of us, especially the
22 hardworking, citizens of these Virgin Islands. I pray that any
23 adverse effects because of this amendment do not affect my
24 family or yours. I know of countless stories of people that cannot
25 work, walk, or properly function because their vehicles were
26 stuck by an uninsured motorist, or the vehicle had an out of state
27 plate, or no plate, what this is doing is adding to an already
28 burdened system. Dealers oftentimes purchase vehicles for their
29 customers, who prior to section 225c were given the vehicles to
30 drive pending the completion of the paperwork at IRB, insurance
31 and the BMV process. There must be a provision that mandates

1 that ALL vehicles brought into the territory be reported by the
2 dealer immediately so that the vehicle and owner information are
3 captured in the BMV database. Currently, dealers are allowed to
4 use their business insurance to obtain the special permits, if the
5 vehicle is brought in for a specific customer, then the customer's
6 insurance is used to issue the permit. Therefore, it is unclear as to
7 why this basic impactful, successful, working, provision of Title
8 20 is being negatively amended.

9
10 If this body wants to give more freedom to the dealers, I strongly
11 suggest that an amount no less than one-hundred and fifty
12 thousand dollars (\$150,000.00) be appropriated to the Bureau of
13 Motor Vehicles so that we can update the database to allow the
14 dealers and shipping companies to report directly to the BMV
15 without accessing the database in its entirety, the goal is to make
16 reporting efficient and hold the companies accountable because
17 there will be a single secured repository of the data.

18
19 I thank you, Committee Chair Joseph, and the other members of
20 the Committee, for giving us this opportunity to include our
21 position on Bill No. 35-0231. The BMV is not in support of this
22 amendment.

23 Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions or
24 need clarification on anything that is written in this
25 correspondence.

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