



**The 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands  
Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Affairs  
BILL NO: 35-0251 - TESTIMONY**

**Submitted By: Vernice M. Gumbs  
Executive Director  
Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission**

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

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
September 24, 2024**

Honorable Carla Joseph, Chairperson of the Committee on Government Operations & Consumer Protection, members, and non-members of the Committee on Government Operations & Consumer Protection, the viewing and listening audience. My name is Vernice M. Gumbs, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Bill No. 35-0251, An Act amending Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 16, section 274 relating to the changing of the name of the Virgin Islands Taxicab Commission to the Virgin Islands Taxicab and Limousine Commission and giving oversight authority to the Virgin Islands Taxicab and Limousine Commission over limousine services operators, and for other related purposes.

Section 1 proposes amending Title 3, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 16, Section 274's heading to read "Virgin Islands Taxicab and Limousine Commission." However, given the evolving landscape of for-hire transportation, the agency's name should be more inclusive of all types of for-hire vehicles. I recommend renaming the agency to the Virgin Islands Vehicle for Hire Regulatory Commission. A well-managed transportation system would not only encourage residents and tourists to move efficiently throughout our towns, but it would also provide a comprehensive platform for access to jobs, education, shopping, medical appointments, reduce traffic congestion, and more.

Regarding the new subsection (j), which currently states:

“(j) The Virgin Islands Taxicab and Limousine Commission may issue permits to operate a limousine service,”

this language should be revised. VITCC does not issue permits; rather, it issues business licenses. These licenses are essential for operators to secure loans from financial institutions or obtain a firearm license from the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD).

Additionally, to ensure clarity, the law should specify that all for-hire vehicle operators—including taxis, tour operators and limousines —must have a Class ‘C’ operator endorsement on their driver’s license. Operators who do not currently have this endorsement, especially those operating limousines, should be given a clear deadline (90-120 days) to obtain it. Achieving a Class ‘C’ endorsement would require attendance at the Taxi and Tour Certification Class.

Furthermore, the Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs (DLCA) must provide VITCC with the current rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. This information will allow the VITCC Board to review, update, and incorporate these materials into a newly updated vehicle-for-hire handbook. Classes offered at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) should also be required to include comprehensive instruction on the rules and regulations governing the for-hire vehicle industry.

I recommend that Section 3 be amended to require that DLCA provides VITCC with the written rules and regulations governing the licensing and operation of limousines in the Territory by the enactment of Bill No. 35-0251. This will ensure clarity between limousine operators and VITCC, facilitating a smooth transition.

Section 4 should be added to amend Title 20 Virgin Islands Code Section 101 by replacing the term “automobile for hire” with “vehicle for hire” and adding the phrase “ridesharing or” before “conducting tours.” This amendment is crucial to ensure that all entities in the industry are covered and to avoid misunderstandings within both the industry and the broader community.

In conclusion, public transportation benefits every sector of Virgin Islands society— individuals, families, communities, and businesses alike. It is a vital lifeline for many Virgin Islanders, connecting them to essential services and opportunities. Public transportation also fosters strong communities, creates jobs, reduces traffic congestion, and supports environmental sustainability. Investment in this sector spurs economic growth at both the local and national levels.

#####