

TESTIMONY ON THE ST. JOHN CELEBEBRATION CLEANUP PLANS
FOR THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, JUSTICE, AND PUBLIC SAFETY

35TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024

1:30 P.M.

ROGER E. MERRITT, JR. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
VIRGIN ISLANDS WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



Good afternoon, Honorable Kenneth L. Gittens, Chairperson, and other Committee members of the 35th Legislature's Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety, and members of the viewing and listening audience. My name is Luis Sylvester, Deputy Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority. I am appearing before you today with Shena Esannason, St. John Solid Waste Collections Manager to provide testimony relevant to the Authority's cleanup plans, and collaborative efforts ahead of this year's St. John Celebration such as curbside pickup, trash removal, trash containerization, and safety/security measures.

SOLID WASTE

The Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority is responsible for trash collection and removal from all venues where activities are held by the Virgin Islands Festival Committee. The responsibilities of the Authority for St. John Celebration 2024 are as follows:

Villages:

1. Clean and prepare the Cruz Bay Parking Lot and The National Park's Ballfield area for the official opening of the Adult and Children's Village. This includes the placement of a twenty (20) yard bin in front of the Cool Breeze Car Rental (as requested by Tourism) for the booth owners to dispose of their trash (i.e., empty boxes, trash, etc.), cleaning and sweeping of the Cruz Bay parking lot, The Frank Powell Park, National Park Visitor's area, and the main roads in the Cruz Bay area from the Cruz Bay dock to Mongoose Junction. We also place 64-gallon carts by each booth and at other strategic locations in the parking lot as well as along the outer perimeter of the village for trash disposal by the revelers.
2. Placement of one twenty (20) yard bin at the Cool Breeze location in the vicinity of the village for daily trash disposal by booth owners and three (3) contractors assigned to the nightly village cleaning. The



bins are usually placed alongside the booths and sidewalks in the Cruz Bay Parking Lot and Cruz Bay areas and by the area heading towards the National Park Ballfield. Contractors are responsible for emptying the contents of full 64-gallon carts into the 20-yard bin and returning the empty carts to their original location throughout the night.

3. In-house and contracted crews are assigned from 8 p.m. to about 4 a.m. (shifts) for nightly cleanup of the village and the surrounding area which includes both villages, Franklin Powell Park and the Cruz Bay roads from the ferry dock all the way to Mongoose Junction Road (National Park Ball field). All trash bags are removed from the 64-gallon carts and placed on the sidewalk curb for the VIWMA private contractor to collect and dispose of them at the Transfer Station. This may take two or three trips depending on the amount of trash. Trash carts are also emptied, washed and disinfected at the end of each village night.
4. Every morning by 6 a.m., the entire Cruz Bay area is cleaned and ready for the next working day. Hybrid's roll-on/roll-off truck will haul the full 20-yard bin from the Cool Breeze area and replace it with an empty bin for the following evening. This happens throughout the duration of the village nights.
5. The vendor for the used oil places the used cooking oil containers strategically in the village (next to the public restroom). These used oil igloos can hold a total capacity of about 1000 gallons (1 or 2 600-gallon containers) of used cooking oil. When an igloo is full, the vendor is called to pump and collect the oil.

Events

Prince and Princess Show

1. In-house staff along with one or two crews are assigned to each event. The event will dictate how many cleanup staff are needed. For example, the Food Fair will need fewer crews than the Queen Show.



2. For all events, we strategically place several 64-gallon trash carts at the event location. The assigned crew(s) will pick up trash and empty the contents of the 64-gallon trash carts throughout the evening. After the function is over the crew(s) will remove our 64-gallon trash carts and clean the entire venue in preparation for another scheduled event.
3. No used oil will be accumulated at this event.

Food Fair/ Boat Race:

1. On Food Fair/Boat Race Day there will be one crew assigned at Franklin Powell Park: for the afternoon shift (2 p.m.-12am.). The crew is responsible for cleaning and assisting in preparation for the opening of the Food Fair and the placement of the 64-gallon carts. During the day, the full carts are emptied and returned to their original location by the crew members on duty throughout the day. At the end of the Food Fair/Boat Race, a complete and thorough cleanup is performed. The 64-gallon carts are removed early the following day. No oil should be accumulated on this day because there will be NO cooking at the Food Fair/Boat Race.
2. Although no oil should be accumulated at this event, an igloo for disposing of used cooking oil is placed at the venue in case of unanticipated need.

J'ouvert/Wet Fete:

1. On the morning of July 3rd (5:30am) all contracted crews and in-house staff will have made their cleanup rounds in both villages and along the road completing the cleanup behind the last band. They rake, pick-up trash, and dispose of full bags into the private hauler's truck. The Wet Fete will take place in the village after J'ouvert where the cleaning crew now concentrates on cleaning the village and collecting bags from the outside of the village and disposing of them into the VIWMA private hauler's trucks. After the Wete Fete, the crews are dispatched back down the J'ouvert route to collect trash, as some vendors are still selling, and more trash accumulates in previously cleaned



areas.

Parade Day - July 4th

1. The rear loader truck is parked by the National Park Visitor's Parking Lot by 10:30 a.m. on the morning of the Parade because of the road closure.
2. 64-gallon trash carts are placed along the parade route for revelers to dispose of their waste.
3. All crews and assigned in-house staff are assigned to the cleanup. The crews and in-house personnel assemble at the National Park Visitor's Parking Lot for the Parade at 3:00pm. They follow behind the last troupe or floupe collecting trash from the route including all side streets, and the beach front area. Trash is deposited into the back of the rear loader which follows behind the parade as well. The cleanup goes from the National Park Parking Lot towards the Post Office, down the one way by the ferry dock and up the road to the Round-about and back toward The National Park for a final clean-up of the roadside.

Final Cleanup:

1. The last night of the village, we clean the inside and outside of the village, and we also clean the area of Cruz Bay streets from the ferry dock to the National Park Ballfield, the roadway in front of the Police Station and the round-about area. The Cruz Bay town will be cleaned and ready for the next working day.
2. All 64-gallon trash carts will be picked up from the Adult Village area by 8am on July 5th and the 20-yard trash bin will be removed from in front of the Cool Breeze area.
3. The oil container will remain at the designated site as per the request of the Department of Tourism for 5 days to allow the booth owners to clean up and dispose of any remaining oil. The container will be removed no later than July 9, 2024.
4. The crews are on standby for the dismantling of the booths. During the dismantling of the booths, a 20-yard bin is placed in the center of the village for the booth owners to discard their trash. After



all the booths are dismantled and removed, crews will clean the parking lot, removing all debris, raking, and disposing of bags into the 20-yard bin until everything is removed. The bin will be hauled, and trash disposed of at the Transfer Station.

Bin site routes during Celebration

Although we assist with the trash collection for the Celebration, we are still responsible for the collection of the VIWMA bin site routes. WMA does the rear loader sites in-house and Hybrid manages the roll off sites. The VIWMA contractor collects the trash between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. on the day of the parade. Also, the in-house rear loader crew reports to work to ensure that the trash on the parade route is collected on parade day as well. VIWMA has no bin site in the Cruz Bay area, therefore, this will not affect our trash collection on the island of St. John.

ENFORCEMENT

The Environmental Enforcement Division on St. Thomas will be supporting the St. John Celebration activities throughout the duration. The Waste Management Enforcement Officers and Inspectors are tasked with contacting all the vendors at the festival village to ensure that proper waste disposal is adhered to. The Waste Management Officers will be in full force walking throughout the village providing coverage and assistance to VIPD officers. Any illegal dumping caught by the Waste Management Officers will result in a \$1,000.00 citation. Village vendors will be responsible for ensuring their waste is properly disposed of at the bin designated for their use at the Village and not at the residential bin sites. Inspectors will be monitoring the cameras and officers will be patrolling the bins sites to insure there is no illegal dumping taking place. Any booth owners caught dumping at the bin sites will be issued a \$1,000.00 citation.



SUMMARY

I close by sincerely thanking the Authority's hard-working staff for their dedication and commitment to not only their day-to-day jobs, but in supporting the future vision of the Authority along with our contractors who assist us in keeping the territory clean. I would also like to thank the Bryan/Roach Administration and the members of the 35th Legislature for their support as we continue to address public health and safety issues related to solid waste and wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal. This concludes my testimony, and I remain available to address any questions. Thank you.