

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
PORT AUTHORITY
TESTIMONY

Carlton Dowe, VIPA Executive Director

**35th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands
Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety**

**The Honorable Senator Kenneth E. Gittens
Chairman**



NOVEMBER 12, 2024

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Good morning, Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Chairperson of the 35th Legislature's Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, all senators present, legislative staff, and the listening and viewing audience. I am Edred Wilkes, Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the Virgin Islands Port Authority, presenting testimony on behalf of the Authority's Executive Director, Mr. Carlton Dowe.

Mr. Dowe received your letter dated November 1, 2024, which referenced the increasing number of complaints from community members concerning illegal activities in and around the Lindbergh Bay area, which is in the vicinity of Cyril E. King Airport. The general Lindbergh Bay area is under the purview of the Virgin Islands Police Department in terms of policing. VIPA's officers are primarily responsible for protecting life and property at the territory's airports and seaports. However, we have an exceptional working relationship with the VIPD and work collaboratively to protect our community and safeguard the territory's assets.

VIPA does have properties in Lindbergh Bay that our officers routinely patrol. The former Island Beachcomber Hotel located on Lindbergh Bay Beach has been vacant for several years. VIPA recently selected a contractor via a competitive bidding process to demolish this property. The notice to proceed should be issued before the end of this year. For the public's knowledge, only the landside of the Lindbergh Bay Beach is under the jurisdiction of the VI Port Authority. The beach or sandy area is the responsibility of the VI

Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation (SPR), and the ocean is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR).

The VI Port Authority remains committed to providing safe and secure facilities for our residents and visitors. We will continue to patrol our properties in the Lindbergh Bay Area, implement any safety measures necessary, and quickly address any issues that may arise. Chairman Gittens, this concludes my testimony, and I will remain available to answer any questions regarding this matter.