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*School of Agriculture*

*Cooperative Extension Service*

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Diane T. Capehart  
Legislature of the Virgin Islands  
Rules and Judiciary Committee Hearing

Dear Senator Capehart:

I am an internationally known ecologist, ethnobotanist, naturalist, agriculturalist, cultural historian, writer, scholar, professor, and environmental activist based at the University of the Virgin Islands, School of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service as an Extension Specialist-Natural and Cultural Resources/Extension Assistant Professor. It is with immense pride and honor to write a letter of support for Mr. Aaron Hutchins, a son of the soil, to be a member to the Virgin Islands Territorial Park Board of Trustees.

I have known Mr. Hutchins for more than 25 years and have the pleasure of interacting with him when he worked at the Department of Planning and Natural Resources as well as interacting with him when he worked at the Nature Conservancy, a global well-known non-profit conservation organization and presently serving with him on the board of the Virgin Islands Trail Alliance. Serving on the Virgin Islands Territorial Park Board of Trustees is a profoundly serious commitment of land stewardship of the Virgin Islands precious natural, cultural, historical, terrestrial, environmental, anthropological, archaeological, and marine resources.

The Virgin Islands Territorial Park System not only plays a major role in the development of our tourist economy, but also as a teaching tool for research, exploration, recreation, and the interaction of the human spirit with nature. Without a doubt, Mr. Hutchins understands how important the Virgin Islands parks are and the connection they have to our cultural and botanical history. His experience speaks for itself in conservation, as well as having an entrepreneur spirit with the multiple local businesses he owns and co-founded throughout the Virgin Islands and the many roles he played in the community, especially mentoring young people.

Mr. Hutchins is well trained educationally and has the educational background in environmental science, ecology, civil engineering, environmental management, and business skills bringing a balance to the Territorial Park board as a great thinker of land stewardship to the park system. He would be an asset to the territorial park board and the people of the Virgin Islands, with a commonsense approach to managing the balance with nature and human habitation.

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Mr. Hutchins comes prepared to work on the territorial park board. His genial personality is also one of his attributes and therefore, he is well-liked and admired by everyone who meets him. I have no reservation in giving Mr. Aaron very high marks for his work ethics, social skills, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom in environmental management and professional behavior. Mr. Hutchins is an enjoyable and enthusiastic person to work with. He is an educational bushman like me, but a humble person always willing to put the people of the Virgin Islands first.

By confirming Mr. Hutchins' nomination to the park board, you would do the right thing on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands by trusting him to safeguard the natural and cultural resources and the responsibility thereof of the development of the park thereby all Virgin Islanders can be proud of. I look forward to the contributions he will make to the Virgin Islands Territorial Park System and its people and visitors alike.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (340) 692-4053 or [odavis@uvi.edu](mailto:odavis@uvi.edu).

Respectfully,



Olasee Davis  
Extension Specialist, Natural and Cultural Resources/Extension Assistant Professor