

TESTIMONY OF MIGUEL QUINONES, PE  
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF RULES AND JUDICIARY  
35TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

January 24, 2024

Greetings Honorable Diane Capehart, Chairwoman of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, and all other honorable members of the 35th Legislature present. Greetings to persons present in the chambers and the listening and viewing audience. I am Miguel Quinones, a Professional Engineer licensed in the Virgin Islands and sustainable development consultant. I appear before you today to offer support the nomination of Mr. Maurice Muia to serve on the Board of Directors of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (VIWAPA).

In preparation for WAPA's sixtieth anniversary, Mr. Muia will rely on his past policy, electrical engineering, utility experience, and community development skills to help rebuild the trust and reliability of our electric and water utility. Improving the services will require addressing the access to resources to support the ideas Mr. Muia has in mind.

I met Mr. Muia fifteen years ago when we worked together at the Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO) where he worked on the deployment of renewable energy financing programs and transportation electrification. He intends to build on the work done by the Energy Office and WAPA in that regard. Mr. Muia understands the value of investing in renewable energy infrastructure which improves the economic, air and water quality of the Territory in lieu of sending the revenues off island to pay for fossil fuels. Mr. Muia's experience with electrification of mobility and installation of energy storage should improve reliability by creating dispatchable virtual power plants and smart grids. Mr. Muia's experience with rate structures combined with services offerings could help address the volatility of electric expenditures for WAPA customers. Finally, Mr. Muia acknowledges that transparency is key to improve WAPA's image and the relationships with WAPA's partners including the Government Employees Retirement System, the PSC, the Legislature, the Water and Power Authority Employees Association, the Virgin Islands Workers Union Local 611, the Professional Technical Employees Union, and other Government agencies.

Madam Chair, thank you and other members of this body for the opportunity to testify in support of this nomination. I'm available to answer any questions that you may have at this time.