



VITEMA VIRGIN ISLANDS TERRITORIAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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March 15, 2024

via email:

Honorable Senator Diane T. Capehart, Chairperson, Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Subject: Endorsement of VI Fire and Emergency Medical Services Director Nominee Antonio Stevens

Dear Honorable Committee Chairperson Diane T. Capehart,

It is with great humbleness that I provide my endorsement to you and all members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary of Antonio Stevens for Governor Bryan's nomination as Director of the US Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services Agency. I have known Antonio as Training Officer and Assistant Director of the VI Fire and Emergency Medical Services and worked with him in the areas of Emergency Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, and Recovery for the past 7 years.

Our first memorable interaction occurred in September 2017, where Antonio served in the St. Croix VITEMA Emergency Operations Center to coordinate the efforts of VITEMA, Territory Governmental Agencies, Virgin Islands National Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Defense Coordinating Element to the Islands of St. John and St. Thomas following the impact of Category 5 Hurricane Irma. I served also in the VITEMA St. Croix EOC at that same time, but as an Amateur Radio Emergency Services volunteer for 33-days and provided daily radio messages between St. John and St. Croix EOCs and other Amateur Radio Volunteers on St. John and St. Thomas. Antonio not only worked many long hours at the EOC side by side other agency staff, but he also ensured each of the staff at the EOC, following the impact of Category 5 Hurricane Maria on St. Croix, took time to spend with their families looking into their own damages and initial recovery efforts.

Antonio took the lead following Hurricane Maria on St. Croix when calls to the EOC for health and wellness checks, to ensure firefighter and VI Police contact teams were sent to out and reported the results back to family members.

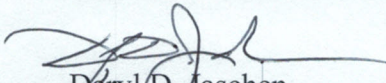
In my role as the Director of VITEMA and with the support from VIFEMS Director Daryl George, Antonio continued to serve in the VITEMA Operations Section during times of activation for potential weather impacts from Tropical Storms and Hurricanes. Antonio coordinated the daily Command and General Staff Meetings during these activation periods.

During the COVID-19 two-year emergency federal declaration, Antonio chaired the weekly Joint Federal and Territory Planning Meetings which ensured all active operational missions were identified, properly staffed, and met the objectives of Governor Byan and the Incident

Commander, Department of Health Commissioner Encarnacion. As part of the Planning Meeting, Antonio ensured all required agencies participated in the meeting and the resulting Incident Action Plan had the approvals of VITEMA, FEMA, and the Department of Health, before being finalized.

Antonio, as the Assistant Director of VI Fire and Emergency Medial Services, has served in numerous unified commands established by VITEMA following emergencies in the Territory. Most memorable in the unified command events were our response to two landfill fires, one in 2019 at the Angilla Landfill on St. Croix and most recently, in September 2023 at the Bovoni Landfill on St. Thomas, where firefighters from St. Croix were sent over to relieve St Thomas and St. John firefighters, to fight the fire which took 21-days to extinguish.

As I have presented, VIFEMS Director Nominee Antonio Stevens has demonstrated a vast knowledge and experience in the Territory with Emergency Response. I see in his future role as Director of VI Fire and Emergency Medical Services, when recommended by this Committee, the Territory will not only become stronger in its capability to meet our current challenges but anticipate future growth in VIFEMS capacity through partnership with VITEMA on Federal Grants to support both training and equipment purchases.



Daryl D. Jaschen
Director, VITEMA