

Testimony of
Vincent Richards

Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement
On behalf of

Lisa M. Alejandro
Commissioner of the Department of Property & Procurement

On

Regarding Bill No. 36-0247
An Act Amending Title 32, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 2, Establishing the Territorial Park
Naming Program

Before

Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports and Parks

Friday, July 17th, 2026

Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall
ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Good Afternoon, Committee Chair Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Committee Vice Chair Carla J. Joseph, Marvin A. Blyden, Alma Francis Heyliger, Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Franklin D. Johnson, Avery L. Lewis, members of the 36th Legislature, Central and Legislative Staff, fellow testifiers, visitors present in the chambers, and members of the viewing and listening audience.

I am Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement (DPP). I appear today on behalf of Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro to offer testimony on Bill No. 36-0247, an act amending Title 32, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 2, to establish the Territorial Park Naming Program, creating a uniform process for naming and renaming parks, recreational areas and facilities owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands.

The Department of Property and Procurement supports the importance of preserving the history, culture, and identity of the Virgin Islands through the naming of public parks and recreational facilities. Establishing a standardized process for naming and renaming these public spaces promotes transparency, consistency, and public engagement while ensuring that individuals and events of significance are appropriately recognized.

The Department supports the intent of the legislation, as a consistent process for naming public facilities that promotes accountability, preserves our history, recognizes community contributions, and strengthens public confidence in government decision-making.

The Department also appreciates the testimony provided by both the Department of Planning and Natural Resources - Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas and the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation. The recommendations offered by both agencies are complementary and should be incorporated into the final legislation.

DPP agrees with the Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas that the legislation should recognize circumstances in which properties are acquired through deeds, donations, grants, or other instruments that prescribe naming requirements or impose restrictions affecting future renaming decisions. Additionally, federal grants and funding agreements frequently contain signage, identification, and acknowledgement requirements that must be honored regardless of any local naming process. These considerations should be expressly addressed to avoid conflicts with existing legal obligations.

The Department supports the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation's recommendation for an inventory of all parks, recreational areas, and facilities that may fall under this proposed Bill. It is important to clearly outline the areas that fall within the Territorial Parks System and those that remain under the purview of the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation, as noted in Title 32, Section 21(c).

While we support the intent of the Bill, we respectfully yield to the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation regarding the implementation of legislation affecting their areas of operational oversight.

As the Government's central property-management agency, DPP will continue to support our sister agencies in confirming and documenting the ownership status of each property within the Territorial Parks System.

The Department of Property and Procurement appreciates the Legislature's commitment to preserving the history and heritage of the Virgin Islands through this initiative. We look forward to collaborating with the sponsoring Senator, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation, and other stakeholders to ensure the legislation is implemented efficiently, responsibly, and in accordance with existing legal and fiscal requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am available to answer any questions the Committee may have.