



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
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**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON DISASTER RECOVERY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PLANNING
36TH LEGISLATURE OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Oversight Hearing on Federal Disaster Recovery Projects
April 24, 2026
Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Chairwoman James and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding housing options to support the Territory's ongoing disaster recovery and infrastructure rebuilding efforts. My name is Kenneth Canty, PE, and I serve as President and Chief Executive Officer of AMC Civil. I appreciate the Committee's attention to a critical practical issue affecting the pace of recovery in the U.S. Virgin Islands: the availability of safe, scalable, and immediately deployable housing for the workforce needed to carry out reconstruction projects.

AMC Civil has assembled a team to offer an accommodation barge solution designed specifically to support long-term worker housing for recovery and reconstruction personnel. Our team includes Cashman Equipment Company, owner of the JMC-24 and JMC-44 accommodation barges, and the K3 Group, which provides food service, housekeeping, and related operational support. As needed for longer-duration maritime support and related vessel services, our broader team also includes experienced marine partners with deep operating experience in Gulf Coast and Caribbean operating environments.

The need for this type of solution is straightforward. The Territory faces a substantial rebuilding agenda, and the success of that effort depends not only on funding and contracts, but also on whether the workers required to perform the work can be housed, fed, transported, and supported in a reliable manner. In a market where available housing is limited, and where recovery activity may require an influx of skilled personnel from outside the Territory, temporary marine housing can serve as an efficient supplement to the existing housing stock without competing as directly with residents for scarce on-island accommodations.

Recent public discussion in the Virgin Islands demonstrates why accommodation barges should be evaluated as a complementary recovery asset rather than as an either-or alternative to other housing strategies. In late 2025, a proposal to rezone property in Estate Bakkerø on St. Thomas for a dormitory-style workforce "man camp" generated substantial neighborhood opposition, with residents expressing concern that a large worker-housing complex could permanently alter a residential community already experiencing traffic and development pressures. The proposal reportedly contemplated housing approximately 450 workers in 15 modular buildings, and government staff also identified site-related

concerns, including stormwater, erosion, and environmental review issues. At the same time, reported use of airfields on St. Croix and the Port Hamilton Refining and Transportation Village by the U.S. military underscores the growing and potentially competing demands that may be placed on existing fixed, land-based “man camp” facilities in the Territory.

Against that backdrop, accommodation barges present a different and more flexible option: a temporary, scalable housing solution capable of meeting immediate construction and recovery workforce needs without requiring rezoning of residential neighborhoods, substantial new land-based infrastructure, or added pressure on the local housing market. Properly deployed, such barges can supplement, rather than replace, other housing strategies while helping to reduce the risk of resident displacement, community disruption, and competition for scarce on-island housing resources.

What is the estimated capacity of accommodation barges, and how many workers could be housed using this option?

The accommodation barges we have proposed are intended to address that gap. Based on the materials submitted to the Legislature, these barges can house approximately 288 people per barge, or up to 576 if two barges are deployed together. The capacity to house more is completely scalable, depending on the number of vessels mobilized and how they are configured for the mission. Our team can provide additional vessels or customized units when project demand increases.

These are not bare-bones platforms. Each accommodation barge includes 36 eight-man modules, complete galley facilities, walk-in freezers, dining areas, recreation space, infirmaries, laundry facilities, a control room, machinery modules, onboard generators, reverse-osmosis water-making capability, and storage for fuel, waste oil, wastewater, and potable water. The eight-man accommodation modules themselves are designed with two four-man rooms, two bathrooms, lockers, and a common area. The dining areas are configured to handle significant meal service capacity, and the supporting materials also outline meal, housekeeping, and common-area maintenance services. Taken together, these features allow the barges to function as complete temporary housing platforms rather than simple bunking sites.

For the Committee’s convenience, attached as an appendix are representative images and fact-sheet materials for the proposed accommodation barges, including exterior and interior views of the JMC-24 and JMC-44 accommodation barges; eight-man accommodation modules; dining and galley facilities; walk-in freezer space; gym and recreation areas; below-deck compartments; control room; Caterpillar generator systems; Atlas incinerator; and reverse-osmosis water-making equipment. These images are drawn from the background proposal submitted in support of AMC Civil’s accommodation barge concept.

Each vessel can operate autonomously for approximately 14-21 days depending on operations and servicing. The barges are supported by two Caterpillar generators, with one serving as backup, and include reverse-osmosis water makers with stated production capability of approximately 900 gallons of fresh water per hour. This level of onboard utility capability is important because it reduces dependence on strained local infrastructure and allows the barges to support recovery operations with a greater degree of operational independence.

How would accommodation barges help address the current shortage of housing for workers needed to support rebuilding efforts in the Territory?

In practical terms, accommodation barges would help address the current shortage of worker housing in several ways.

- First, they provide immediate surge capacity. Two barges are currently available and can be deployed upon notice to mobilize, allowing the Territory and its contractors to respond quickly when project staffing ramps up.
- Second, they allow housing to scale with construction demand. Recovery work rarely arrives all at once; it builds in phases. A marine housing platform allows the number of workers housed to increase as project activity grows, without waiting for new permanent housing stock to come online.
- Third, they reduce pressure on residents and existing housing inventory. A marine-based temporary housing solution creates a separate lodging option for off-island workers, helping preserve more of the on-island market for residents, families, and other existing users. This is particularly important where disaster recovery activity and normal housing demand are competing for limited space.
- Fourth, they provide an integrated living-and-support environment. Because the barges include food service, laundry, recreation, infirmary space, and utility systems, they can support workforce readiness in a more organized and efficient way than a fragmented lodging approach spread across multiple hotels, rentals, or temporary sites.

What locations have been identified as suitable for docking accommodation barges, and have any site assessments been conducted?

The barges can operate in relatively shallow water and temporary docking facilities can be provided if needed. The site location would be one that has 8' of draft, 150' of beach or waterfront, for us to setup a docking facility for workers to access the barges. While a final site-selection report remains to be completed, our team's review to date indicates that the concept is operationally feasible and that suitable berthing options can be identified through a coordinated technical process.

Our initial assessment has focused on the principal factors that will govern successful deployment, including water depth and marine access, proximity to active recovery projects and transportation routes, port operations and coordination, power supply options, maintenance and servicing requirements, and landside accommodations needed to move workers safely and efficiently to and from the berthing location. Based on that review, we believe the accommodation barge concept can be implemented in a manner that is both practical and responsive to the Territory's recovery needs.

Accordingly, the next step should be a coordinated site-validation process involving the relevant territorial agencies, port and marine stakeholders, prime contractors, and recovery officials to confirm the optimal location or locations for deployment. That process should be designed to identify sites that best balance marine feasibility, worker transportation efficiency, safety, operational independence, and compatibility with surrounding port and community activity. Based on the work completed thus far, we believe viable options exist off St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix, and that final confirmation can be achieved through prompt interagency and stakeholder coordination.

It is also important to note that this is not a novel or untested concept. The materials provided by our team state that these barges have previously been used successfully in demanding environments, including multi-year deployment in the Caspian Sea, post-storm support in Puerto Rico, and recovery support in Port Fourchon, Louisiana, after Hurricane Ida. That operating history matters because it demonstrates that the platform has been used in remote, austere, and disaster-related conditions where reliable worker support was essential.

Conclusion

The Territory's recovery cannot move faster than its capacity to field and sustain the workforce needed to do the work. Accommodation barges offer a temporary, scalable, and near-term option to help solve one of the most immediate logistical barriers to reconstruction: where to house the workers. They can provide substantial bed capacity, onboard food and support services, operational independence, and deployment flexibility, while reducing pressure on the limited local housing supply. For those reasons, we believe accommodation barges deserve serious consideration as part of the Virgin Islands' broader disaster recovery housing strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Appendix A: Representative Accommodation Barge Images

Appendix A-1 (page 6) – Cashman Equipment accommodation barge overview image and title page.

Appendix A-2 (page 7) – Operational history / extreme-conditions deployment image.

Appendix A-3 (page 8) – Capacity and autonomous operation image.

Appendix A-4 (page 9) – Equipment/features summary page listing modules and systems.

Appendix A-5 (pages 10–11) – Eight-man accommodation module images.

Appendix A-6 (pages 12–13) – Dining room images.

Appendix A-7 (pages 14–15) – Galley images.

Appendix A-8 (page 16) – Walk-in freezer image.

Appendix A-9 (page 17) – Gym and recreation room image.

Appendix A-10 (page 18) – Below-deck compartments image.

Appendix A-11 (page 19) – Control room image.

Appendix A-12 (page 20) – Caterpillar generator systems image.

Appendix A-13 (page 21) – Atlas incinerator image.

Appendix A-14 (page 22) – Reverse-osmosis water-maker image.

CASHMAN EQUIPMENT Accommodation Barges



Operating in extreme conditions, with temperatures ranging from -40 to +30 degrees Celsius, the JMC 24 and 44 operated on D Island successfully and without interruption for 36 months.





Required to accommodate a minimum of 290 persons on board, each vessel can operate autonomously for up to 14 days.

Each Accommodation Barge Includes

- 36 Eight Man Modules
- 2 Complete Galley Modules
 - 2 Walk in Freezers
- 5 Dining Area Modules
- 2 Dry Goods Modules
- 1 Recreation Module
 - 2 Infirmaries
 - 1 Laundry Module
- 1 Control Room Module
- 3 Machinery Modules
 - 1 Atlas incinerator
 - 1 Kenbay Compactor
- 2 800 KW Caterpillar Generators
- 2 R/O Watermakers Containerized
- Fuel, waste oil, waste water and potable water storage tanks



8 Man Accommodation Modules

- Sleeps 8 men: Two-4 man rooms
 - Two bathrooms
 - 8 Lockers
 - Center common area with seating & television



8 Man Accommodation Modules



Dining Room

Capacity: 150 People



Dining Room



Galley



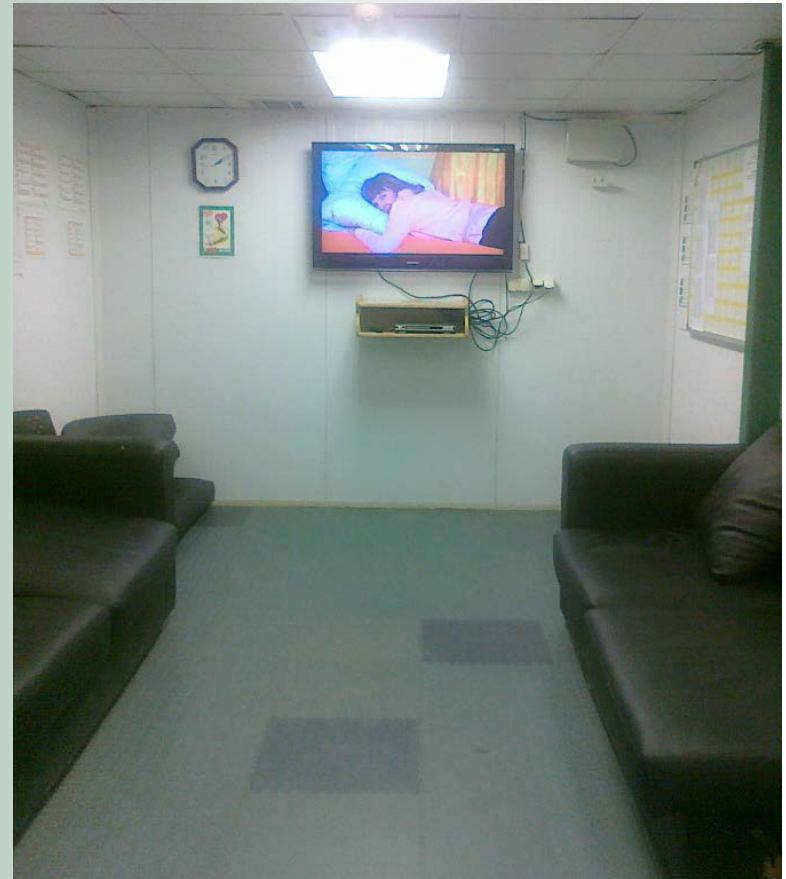
Galley



Walk In Freezer



Gym & Rec Room



Below Deck Compartments



Control Room



CAT Generators

Two Caterpillar C27
Generators:

- Rated 800 KW/1000 KVA
- 60 Hz, 1800 RPM, 480 Volts
- Vessel operates on one generator. Second unit serves as backup generator.



Atlas Incinerator

- 600 Series
- Model 600 SLP



Water Makers

- Two Water Maker brand, reverse osmosis Water Makers
- Model WMFQ-22,000
- Capacity to produce 900 gallons each of fresh water per hour

