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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & AGRICULTURE

AGENDA – REVISED I

The Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture has scheduled a meeting for Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 10:00 AM in the Frits E. Lawaetz Legislative Conference Room on St. Croix, Virgin Islands to provide updates on the following:

BLOCK I - 10:00 AM

State of Agriculture in the Virgin Islands

The Department of Agriculture and key stakeholders will provide a comprehensive update on the state of agriculture in the Virgin Islands, including challenges faced by local farmers, ongoing initiatives to support agricultural production, food security efforts, and the availability of land, water, and financial resources. The discussion will also address workforce development within the agricultural sector, initiatives designed to strengthen local food production, the expansion of farm-to-table programs, sustainability initiatives, and opportunities for collaboration between government agencies and private stakeholders.

Invited Testifiers:

Honorable Dr. Louis E. Petersen, Jr., Commissioner, Virgin Islands
Department of Agriculture

Dr. Nate Olive, President, Virgin Islands Farmers Alliance

Mr. Dale Brown, Co-Owner, Sejah Farms

Mrs. Yvette Brown, Co-Owner, Sejah Farms

Mrs. Sommer Sibilly-Brown, Executive Director, VI Good Food Coalition

Mr. Elridge Thomas, Member, We Grow Food, Inc.

Dr. Usman Adamu, Dean and Director, UVI School of Agriculture

LUNCH BREAK

BLOCK II

Discussion on Bill No. 36-0063 – Clarification of Gross Receipts Tax Obligations for Contractors

The Committee will receive testimony on Bill No. 36-0063, An Act amending Title 33, Virgin Islands Code, Subtitle 1, Chapter 3, Sections 41, 42(a), and 43(a) and (c), to clarify that gross receipts taxes must be paid by all contractors doing business in the Virgin Islands regardless of physical location. This discussion aims to examine the implications of this legislation on tax compliance, enforcement mechanisms, and the potential economic-



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-impact on both local and external contractors. Testifiers will provide insights into the legal framework, administrative considerations, and anticipated outcomes.

Invited Testifiers:

Honorable Kevin G. McCurdy, Commissioner, Department of Finance

Mr. Julio Rhymer, Sr., Director, Office of Management and Budget

Mr. Joel Lee, Director, V.I. Bureau of Internal Revenue

BLOCK III

Discussion on Bill No. 36-0019 – Prohibiting Credit and Debit Card

Surcharges

The Committee will receive testimony on Bill No. 36-0019, An Act amending Title 12A, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 2, Subchapter I, Section 101 to prohibit the imposition of a surcharge for the use of a credit card or debit card. The discussion will examine the potential impact of this legislation on businesses, consumers, and financial institutions. Testifiers will provide perspectives on legal considerations, consumer protection, and economic implications.

Invited Testifiers:

Ms. Glendina P. Matthew, Esq., Director, Division of Banking, Insurance, and Financial Regulation, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Honorable Ian Clement, Deputy Attorney General, Virgin Islands
Department of Justice

Honorable Horace Graham, Assistant Commissioner, Department of
Licensing & Consumer Affairs

Mr. John P. Woods, President, St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Akeel St. Jean, Esq., Chairman of the Board, St. Croix Chamber of
Commerce