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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & AGRICULTURE

AGENDA

REVISED

TO: Members, Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture

The Honorable Angel L. Bolques, Vice-Chair
The Honorable Marvin A. Blyden
The Honorable Alma Francis Heyliger
The Honorable Marise C. James, Esq.
The Honorable Franklin D. Johnson
The Honorable Clifford A. Joseph, Sr.

FROM: The Honorable Senator Hubert L. Frederick
Chairman, Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture
36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

DATE: October 29, 2025

RE: November 10, 2025- Committee on Economic
Development and Agriculture Hearing

The Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture has scheduled a hearing for Monday, November 10, 2025, at 10:00 AM in the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall on St. Thomas, Virgin Islands to provide testimony on the following:

BLOCK I – 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM

The Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture will receive testimony from the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs on business licensing modernization, consumer protection enforcement, oversight and compliance mechanisms for licensed businesses, small business support, and operational challenges; and from the Department of Tourism providing an overview of 2024 tourism performance and its economic impact, including visitor arrivals, key performance indicators, and the status of cruise tourism by district. The Committee will also conduct oversight on the financial management of the Tourism Revolving Fund, departmental expenditures, staffing levels across the Territory, and essential tourism-related infrastructure such as public restrooms. Additional areas of oversight will include marketing and sponsorship efforts outside the Territory and their measurable outcomes, as well as cultural tourism initiatives featuring calypso, music, and local artists. Further review will cover the 2024 Crucian Christmas Festival, St. John Celebration, and St. Thomas Carnival—highlighting achievements, challenges, and opportunities for improvement—alongside plans for the 2025 festival season.



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Invited Testifiers:

- Honorable H. Nathalie Hodge, Commissioner,
VI Department of Licensing and Consumer Affair
- Jeniffer Matarangas-King, Commissioner Nominee,
VI Department of Tourism

LUNCH BREAK 12:00 PM TO 12:30 PM

BLOCK II - 12:30 PM TO 2:30 PM

The Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture will receive testimony from the Department of Planning and Natural Resources on the Division of Fish and Wildlife's programs and management strategies, including updates on environmental education outreach, territorial fisheries management and enforcement, wildlife conservation, territorial fishery policies, and the Invasive Species Eradication Community Program, and from the Caribbean Fishery Management Council on regional fisheries management and its impacts on the U.S. Virgin Islands, including updates on island-based fishery management plans, collaboration with local fishers and government agencies, sustainable fisheries strategies, impacts of federal regulations, and available funding opportunities.

Invited Testifiers:

- Honorable Jean Pierre-Oriol, Commissioner
VI Department of Planning & Natural Resources
- Miguel A. Rolon, Executive Director
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

BLOCK III - 2:30 PM TO 4:30 PM

The Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture will receive testimony from the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture on the state of agriculture in the Virgin Islands, including updates on Act 8854 regarding agricultural maintenance and equipment purchases, the USDA's Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program, the department's equipment maintenance plan, pricing of goods and



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services, Act 8306 establishing the Virgin Islands Agricultural Caribbean Conference, and Act 8404 implementing the Territorial Agriculture Plan, and from the University of the Virgin Islands on the Territorial Agriculture Plan and the V.I. Agricultural Caribbean Conference, including status updates, stakeholder engagement, funding sources, expenditures, projected outcomes, challenges, and solutions, as well as conference objectives, planning milestones, participants, goals, and budget details.

Invited Testifiers:

Honorable Dr. Louis Petersen, Commissioner
VI Department of Agriculture

Dr. Safiya George, President
University of the Virgin Islands

Cc: All Senators
All Chiefs of Staff
All Divisions
Public Affairs