

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

BILL NO. 36-0055

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

March 28, 2025

An Act honoring and commending Mark Sabino for his outstanding service and commitment to the people of the Virgin Islands by renaming the West Indian Company Dock in St. Thomas “The Mark Sabino Marine Cruise Facility”

PROPOSED BY: Senator Ray Fonseca

WHEREAS, Mark Sabino was born in 1954 on St. Thomas to Joseito Sabino and Vida McIntosh Sabino;

WHEREAS, he graduated from Charlotte Amalie High School in 1973 and joined the U.S. Navy beginning his career in the medical corps where he served in the critical medical roles of orthopedic surgery, general surgery, ICU, recovery, and emergency room care at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia;

WHEREAS, Mark Sabino volunteered for the Navy SEALs and completed the rigorous Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training;

WHEREAS, his specialized training included the elite military courses of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Medical course, U.S. Army Parachute Jump School, U.S. Army Special Forces Medical course, and the U.S. Navy Independent Duty Corpsman course, making him a highly skilled SEAL medic with expertise in hyperbaric chamber operations for treating diving accidents;

WHEREAS, during his distinguished service in the U.S. Navy Special Warfare community, Mark Sabino was deployed to the Western Pacific with Underwater Demolition

1 Team 12, where he supported and trained Allied Special Forces including the Korean SEALs,
2 Philippine Special Operations Group, and Thailand SEALs;

3 **WHEREAS**, he was assigned to the specialized underwater warfare SEAL Delivery
4 Vehicle (SDV) Team 22 on the east coast with additional deployments in Puerto Rico and
5 throughout the Caribbean;

6 **WHEREAS**, after his military service, from 1981-1987, Mark Sabino worked at the
7 University of the Virgin Islands by training students in the Marine Science programs and
8 SCUBA and he maintained field study equipment;

9 **WHEREAS**, from 1987 to 1997, Mark Sabino worked in the Tourist Submarine Industry
10 serving as both Senior Submarine Pilot and Operations Manager for The Looking Glass
11 Submarine and Atlantis Submarine;

12 **WHEREAS**, Mark Sabino, as a Senior Submarine Pilot, trained and developed
13 submarine crew members, including high school graduates who underwent a rigorous training
14 program to become certified Submarine Pilots, which involved earning a U.S. Coast Guard
15 Captain's License for 100-ton vessels and mastering complex systems like pneumatics,
16 hydraulics, and life support systems;

17 **WHEREAS**, Mark Sabino ensured that all submarine pilot trainees completed extensive
18 submarine training modules covering critical aspects such as battery bank systems, air
19 conditioning systems, and hydrogen gas monitoring and the crew was required to demonstrate
20 proficiency in operating and maintaining these systems and navigating emergency procedures
21 by performing 100 day and night training dives to showcase underwater navigation expertise;

22 **WHEREAS**, Mark Sabino was responsible for operating the submarine and maintaining
23 the life support systems that ensure proper oxygen and CO2 levels for the safety of the crew
24 and passengers when tourists were taken down to depths of 150 feet in real submarines;

25 **WHEREAS**, as Operations Manager, Mark Sabino oversaw the safe and productive day-
26 to-day offshore submarine operations, crew training standards and scheduled maintenance of
27 all related equipment, including ferry boats, surface boats, subchargers, compressors, and

generators and he ensured all operations were conducted timely and in compliance with all federal and local regulations;

WHEREAS, Mark Sabino was strongly committed to community engagement and hosted high school students and UVI Marine Biology classes on educational trips and he advocated for the installation of moorings at popular dive sites to prevent environmental damage caused by boat anchors and successfully persuaded the CZM board to implement moorings that protected the coral reefs at these locations;

WHEREAS, in 1997, Mark Sabino began working as Marine Manager and is now the Director of Marine and Cruise Services at The West Indian Company Limited (WICO) where he processes over 500 cruise ship berthing requests annually and manages both contractual agreements and the physical constraints of the WICO docking facility;

WHEREAS, Mark Sabino plays a critical role in overseeing the complex berthing process, ensures the fulfillment of guaranteed berthing agreements with major cruise lines and navigates the infrastructural limitations of the WICO dock, such as its 3300-foot length and the shallow entrance channel;

WHEREAS, Mark Sabino is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the 3300-foot steel and concrete WICO dock, which faces significant challenges from constant seawater exposure, corrosion, and the immense pressure of docking cruise ships as large as 180,000 tons;

WHEREAS, he has been instrumental in advancing marine services and cruise operations in the Virgin Islands through his leadership and expertise across various fields;

WHEREAS, he has a deep commitment to the community, consistently fostering opportunities for local Virgin Islanders through training, mentorship, and advocacy;

WHEREAS, Mark Sabino is an accomplished artist with no formal training and has created an extensive body of work including freehand painting, drawing, sand carvings, and graphic designs for publications, t-shirts, posters, murals, and logos; he received a grant from the Council on the Arts for illustrating Tony's Visit, a children's coloring book, and designing the logo for UVI's Afternoon on the Green for 20 years;

1 **WHEREAS**, Mark Sabino is married to Tereasa Sabino for 45 years; they met in the
2 Navy where she served as a Hospital Corpsman;

3 **WHEREAS**, the couple are the proud parents of two sons, Shawn, who served in the
4 Marine Corps, and Jaun, who served in the Navy, and the proud grandparents of four
5 grandchildren; Now Therefore,

6 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

7 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature of the Virgin Islands, on behalf of the people of the Virgin
8 Islands, hereby honors, commends, and thanks Mark Sabino for his unwavering dedication and
9 deep commitment to the Virgin Islands community.

10 **SECTION 2.** The West Indian Company Ltd. Dock shall be renamed the “Mark Sabino
11 Marine Cruise Facility”.

12 **SECTION 3.** In recognition and appreciation of Mark Sabino’s contributions to the
13 people of the Virgin Islands, the President of the Legislature, or the President’s designee, shall
14 have a perma plaque copy of the act prepared and presented to Mr. Sabino at an appropriate
15 ceremony to be held at the West Indian Company Ltd. Dock.

16 **SECTION 4.** The sum of \$10,000 is appropriated from the General Fund of the Treasury
17 of the Government of the Virgin Islands to the West Indian Company, Ltd. in the fiscal year
18 ending September 30, 2025, for the erection of appropriate signage in an appropriate location
19 at the West Indian Company Ltd. Dock.

20 **BILL SUMMARY**

21 This bill honors Mark Sabino by renaming the West Indian Company Ltd. Dock, the
22 “Mark Sabino Marine Cruise Facility” for his years of dedicated service to the people of the
23 Virgin Islands and the advancement of its marine operations. The bill further appropriates
24 \$10,000 from the General Fund to erect the proper signage at the dock.

25 **BR25-0259/March 13, 2025/CBM**