

**Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services Committee on
Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, Consumer Protection**

36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands



March 10, 2026

Presented By: Antonio O. Stevens

Good morning, Honorable Senator Avery L. Lewis, Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection, other distinguished Committee members, and the listening and viewing audience.

I am Antonio Stevens, Director of the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services. Also appearing on behalf of the agency are Assistant Director of Fire Clarence Stephenson and St. John Deputy Chief Magabe Calixte.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Bill 36-0232, an act authorizing the disposal of green waste using controlled incineration technologies, including air curtain incinerators.

VIFEMS welcomes the adoption of improved waste management strategies in the Territory and supports Bill 36-0232. The Bill amends Act 8018 to grant authority to Waste Management Authority and landfill operators to burn green waste using controlled incinerators, air curtain incinerators or other substantially similar technology. If not effectively managed, green waste can accumulate at the landfills and create conditions that are conducive to fires. And, as we have seen in recent years, fires at the territory's landfills can be major events that last for days or weeks and require significant resources to extinguish.

Bill 36-0232, specifically the language proposed to replace Subsection (a) in Act 8018, gives WMA the legal authorization needed to implement an effective green waste management strategy, and VIFEMS is in support of the language as written.

The new Subsection (b) proposed in the Bill outlines specific permitting requirements for the open burning of green waste on private property. While these requirements closely align with the agency's current criteria for issuing burn permits, VIFEMS recommends the following revisions:

- Adding language that states "The burning will occur during daylight hours."
- Removing "during daylight hours" from Subsection(b)(2)
- Replacing Virgin Islands Fire Services with Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

We hope that this body will consider these recommendations and will take favorable action on a final draft of the Bill that incorporates them.

Thank you again for affording VIFEMS the opportunity to provide testimony on this important legislation. We await your questions.