

Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services Committee on

Government Operations, Veterans Affairs, Consumer Protection

36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands



March 23, 2026

Presented By: Clarence Stephenson

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

I am Clarence Stephenson, Assistant Director of Fire for the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services. Accompanying me today is Fire Chief Eustace Grant Jr.

We appear before you to provide testimony on Bill 36-0232, legislation authorizing the disposal of green waste using controlled incineration technologies and to answer any questions you may have.

As stated in testimony provided on March 10, 2026, the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services is in support of the Bill but recommends revisions to the language concerning burning on private property.

Without an effective strategy for managing the Territory's vegetative waste, green waste may accumulate at the landfills and create conditions that are conducive to fires. Landfill fires can persist for days or weeks and may require considerable resources to extinguish. They also present significant risks for firefighters, who may be exposed to toxic smoke, extreme heat, and other hazards when responding.

Bill 36-0232, specifically the language proposed to replace Subsection (a) in Act 8018, will enable the Waste Management Authority and landfill operators to implement an effective green waste management strategy, and VIFEMS is in support of the language as written.

VIFEMS also supports the proposed Subsection (b), which speaks to the burning of green waste on private property, but 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.

Bill 36-0232 is a critical piece of legislation, and we are hopeful that this body will advance a final draft that reflects our recommended changes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. We are available to answer any questions you may have.