

# COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HOSPITALS & HUMAN SERVICES

## The Honorable Ray Fonseca

CHAIRMAN



### 36<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands

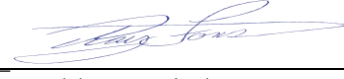
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**TO:** Honorable Hubert L. Frederick, Vice-Chair  
Honorable Marvin A. Blyden  
Honorable Alma Francis-Heyliger  
Honorable Kenneth L. Gittens  
Honorable Milton E. Potter  
Honorable Kurt A. Violet

**FROM:** Honorable Ray Fonseca   
Chairman, Committee on Health, Hospitals & Human Services

**DATE:** May 12, 2026

**RE:** AGENDA -Committee Hearing

Please be advised that the Committee on Health, Hospitals & Human Services will be conducting a hearing on **Monday, June 01, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., in the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Chambers, on St. Thomas.**

#### **BLOCK I** 10:00-1:00pm

The Committee will receive testimony from the Department of Health regarding the Territory's mental and behavioral health system, with emphasis on the use of appropriated funds, progress and timelines for facility construction and operational readiness, deployment of behavioral health vans, workforce recruitment and retention, community-based services, and interagency coordination. The Department is also expected to provide a detailed update on equipment and asset disposition from demolished or decommissioned facilities, current nursing shortages and stabilization strategies, and relocation plans for staff affected by ongoing renovation, demolition, or rebuilding projects to ensure continuity of public health services.

#### **INVITED TESTIFIERS:**

The Honorable Justa E. Encarnacion  
Commissioner  
Department of Health

#### **BLOCK II** 1:45pm-4:00pm

The Committee will receive testimony on landfill management practices and soil health across the Territory, with a specific focus on public health impacts. Testimony will examine the effects

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of waste and vegetation burning and the use of incineration methods on air quality, respiratory health, and vulnerable populations, including associated health risks, regulatory safeguards, and mitigation of harmful emissions. The members will also receive testimony on the state of soil health and its direct relationship to food quality, food security, and overall public health; including the importance of nutrient-rich soil in supporting safe, sustainable agricultural production. Additionally, testimony will address the benefits of composting green waste as a sustainable alternative to reduce landfill burden, enhance soil fertility, and mitigate environmental health risks, along with recommendations for policy, oversight, and sustainable land management practices to better protect the health and well-being of residents across the Territory.

#### INVITED TESTIFIERS:

The Honorable Louis E Petersen, Jr. Ph.D.  
Commissioner,  
Department of Agriculture

Ms. Dawn Henry, Esq  
Vice-President & Chief Executive Officer  
Island Green Living Association

Dr. Polly Hoppin  
Research Professor,  
Environmental Health Science and Health Policy  
University of Massachusetts

Mr. Harith Wickrema  
President,  
Island Green Living Association

Ms. Judith Enck  
President,  
Beyond Plastics

Mr. Mark Lichtenstein  
Executive Operating Officer,  
SUNY College of Environment Science

Mr. Scott Woods  
CEO and Founder,  
Sustainable Generation

Ms. Jane Williams  
Chairwoman,  
Sierra Club National Clean Air Team

Mrs. Sommer Sibilly-Brown  
Founder/President  
Good Food Coalition

Dr. Lisa Lewis  
Dean of Nursing,  
University of the Virgin Islands