Legislature of the Virgin Islands

CAPITOL BUILDING, P.O. BOX 1690
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The Honorable
Marvin A. Blyden
Senator

CHAIRMAN
Housing, Transportation & Telecommunications

VICE CHAIR
Budget, Appropriations & Finance

MEMBER
Economic Development & Agriculture

Culture, Youth, Aging & Parks

Health, Hospitals, & Human Services

Committee Report

Committee on Housing, Transportation, & Telecommunications

The Committee on Housing, Transportation & Telecommunications convened on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 9:15 a.m. in the Earle B. Ottley Legislative Chambers on St. Thomas to receive testimony from various Governmental Agencies regarding Homelessness and Homeownership. As well as the current maintenance issues occurring at the Jackson Development Company's properties and the consideration of offer to Accept Real Property In lieu of Property Taxes.

The Committee heard testimony from the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority regarding homelessness in the Territory and the status of federal programs supporting homeless assistance, including the HOME Program, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and the HOME-ARP Program. Testimony focused on current program utilization, provider participation and funding awards, barriers to effective service delivery, and any known changes or risks affecting the stability and outlook of future federal funding.

Jackson Development Company, LLC was requested to provide testimony regarding ongoing maintenance and repair deficiencies at tax credit residential properties acquired in 2024, including serious housing code violations at the Calabash Boom housing complex, where residents have been without sanitation facilities since December 10, 2025, creating an unresolved public health hazard. This hearing assisted the Committee in evaluating compliance with statutory housing standards, determining the need for legislative or oversight action, and examining the role of the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority in the approval, monitoring, and post-transfer compliance of the subject properties.

The Committee also heard testimony from the Virgin Islands Housing Authority on the status of its operations and the state of affordable housing programs in the Territory, including the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program, with emphasis on current performance, major projects, and challenges affecting service delivery. Testimony

addressed the growing number of constituent complaints regarding maintenance conditions at VIHA properties, including the status of maintenance operations, strategies to address deferred repairs, and any resource constraints contributing to these issues.

Lastly, Consideration of offer to Accept Real Property (Road Plot 1-1 Spanish town, Road Plot 2-1 Estate Annaberg and Shannon Grove, Road Plot 5-1, Road Plot 10-1 and Road Plot 11-1 Estate Blessing, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands) in Lieu of Property Taxes in accordance with Title 33, Section 2494a, Virgin Islands Code.

Legislative Voting on Motion to Disapprove Offer to Accept Real Estate Property In lieu of Property Taxes.

Committee Members	Y/N
Senator Marvin A. Blyden, Chair	Y
Senator Clifford A. Joseph, Sr.	Absent
Senator Ray Fonseca	Y
Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff	Absent
Senator Marise C. James	Y
Senator Carla Joseph	Y
Senator Kurt A. Vialet	Absent

Legislative Attendance

Committee Members Present	Non-Committee Members Present
Senator Marvin A. Blyden, Chair	Senator Novelle E. Francis
Senator Clifford A. Joseph, Sr.	Senator Avery Lewis
Senator Ray Fonseca	
Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff - Excused	
Senator Marise C. James	
Senator Carla Joseph	
Senator Kurt A. Vialet	

Invited Testifiers

Eugene Jones, Executive Director, Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority	Averil George, Commissioner, Virgin Islands Department of Human Services
Mario M. Brooks, Commissioner, Virgin Islands Police Department	Wynnie Testamark, Director, Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections
Dr. Suzanne Darrow-Magras, Board Secretary, Continuum of Care	Dan Derima, Executive Director, Meeting the Needs of The Community, Inc.
Andrea Shillingford, Executive Director, catholic Charities of the Virgin Islands	Junia John-Straker, Chief Executive Office, Luthern Social Services
Bob Jackson, Executive Director, Founder/Managing Partner, Jackson Development Company, LLC	Dwayne Alexander, Executive Director, Virgin Islands Housing Authority
Ludence Romney, Tax Assessor, Office of the Lieutenant Governor	Vincent Roberts, Commissioner, Department of Sports, Parks, & Recreation
Jehangir Zakaria, Vice-President, General Manager, Chief Operating Officer, St. Croix Renaissance Group	

The Committee on Housing, Transportation & Telecommunications adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Prepared by: _____
Vanessa Ortiz Williams
Chief Legislative Researcher