

**TESTIMONY FOR THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING,  
TRANSPORTATION, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**VIRGIN ISLANDS WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

**36TH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026**

**11:00 A.M.**

**HANNIBAL “MIKE” WARE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
VIRGIN ISLANDS WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

Good morning, Honorable Senator Marvin A. Blyden, Chairman of the Committee on Housing, Transportation and Telecommunications; other distinguished members of the 36th Legislature; and members of the viewing and listening public.

I am Hannibal “Mike” Ware, Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed Virgin Islands Roadside Property Maintenance and Vegetation Act. The intent of this legislation—to improve the safety, appearance, and overall condition of our roadways, while setting guidelines for property owners to maintain roadside vegetation and prevent encroachment onto public roads and utility lines—is both timely and necessary.

Maintaining clear roadways, controlling vegetation overgrowth, and safeguarding critical infrastructure are vital to protecting our community’s quality of life and the positive image of our islands. This year alone, I have personally witnessed two accidents caused by overgrowth that forced vehicles into the center of the roadway.

While this legislation focuses on vegetation and property maintenance, roadside conditions are often influenced by related issues such as litter and illegal dumping—areas where the Authority supports through enforcement and public education. Dense, unmanaged vegetation along roadsides has long served as a cover for illegal dumping – one of the most persistent challenges we face in preserving our paradise. Our crews regularly encounter materials illegally deposited in overgrown areas that then become the de facto responsibility of public clean-up operations.

We are actively increasing enforcement efforts in known illegal dumping areas, while continuing to assist with multiple roadside cleanups on each island where bulk waste, tires, and trash have been illegally disposed. These efforts include recent cleanups along East Airport Road on St. Croix and across from McBean Park in Old Tutu on St. Thomas. In addition, we have realigned our Communications Division to focus specifically on public education and behavior change, with a comprehensive public awareness campaign scheduled to launch in the coming weeks. Lasting change requires altering behavior—not just reacting to it—and the same principle applies to this proposed bill.

I would like to highlight one critical operational consideration as this legislation is considered and potentially implemented—particularly on St. Thomas.

At present, the Authority is unable to accept green waste at the Anguilla landfill on St. Thomas due to capacity constraints. This creates a real challenge for property owners who will be required to clear vegetation but may not have a viable disposal option.

Without an accessible pathway for green waste disposal, there is a heightened risk of unintended consequences—such as illegal dumping—which would undermine the very goals this legislation is trying to achieve.

To address this, among other efforts, the Authority has been advancing a solution through the use of air curtain incinerators to safely and efficiently manage green waste. We have engaged

the community through public meetings and hearings, and this proposal is currently moving through the legislative process.

Legislative alignment is critical. Expectations for compliance must be matched with the operational capability to meet those expectations.

Well-maintained roadsides are not merely a cosmetic concern; they are a core infrastructure and public safety issue that directly impacts the reliability of government service delivery and the provision of essential services to households across the territory. I would like to thank bill sponsors Senator Gittins and Senator Lewis for proposing this bill. This legislation not only reflects a proactive approach to a growing concern across the territory, but it also addresses very real and preventable hazards.

We are supportive of this bill's passage and stand ready to assist the Department of Public Works with operational data, field experience, or interagency coordination in support of effective implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear, and I look forward to your questions.