

COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, YOUTH, AGING, SPORTS AND PARKS

09/10/2026-AMENDED AND REPORTED OUT TO THE FLOOR

07/17/2026-REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

BILL NO. 36-0247

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

February 10, 2026

An act amending title 32 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 2, establishing the Territorial Park Naming Program creating a uniform process for naming and renaming parks, recreational areas, and facilities owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands

PROPOSED BY: Senator Marise C. James
Sponsor: Avery L. Lewis

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. The Legislature of the Virgin Islands finds that parks, recreational areas, and facilities are essential to the quality of life, culture, and identity of Virgin Islands communities. The Legislature further finds that consistent and transparent naming practices promote community engagement, historical preservation, and recognition of civic contributions.

SECTION 2. Title 32 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 2 is amended by adding the following new section 27:

“§ 27. Territorial Park Naming Program

(a) When reviewing a proposal to name or rename a park, recreational area, or facility, the Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas shall consider the following:

(1) the geographic location, descriptive features, or adjoining subdivision, street, or school;

(2) outstanding natural or geological features;

(3) cultural, historical, or community significance;

(4) a major historic event, group, or organization with a direct connection to the park or its community;

(5) an individual (living or deceased) whose accomplishments or service substantially benefited the Virgin Islands community; or

(6) an individual or organization that contributed significantly to the acquisition or development of the property or facility, including through a deed, donation, sponsorship, or other substantial financial support.

(b) Any person or organization may submit a written request to name or rename a park, recreational area, or facility to the Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas.

(1) The request must include:

(a) the proposed name;

(b) the location and description of the site; and

(c) documentation showing how the proposed name meets the criteria in subsection

(2) The Division shall:

(a) review each submission for compliance with this section;

(b) notify all property owners within a 1,000-foot radius of the site;

(c) conduct at least one public meeting to receive public comment; and

(d) forward its recommendation and findings to the Legislature for approval.

(c) Renaming may only occur when:

(a) continued use of the existing name is contrary to the best interests of the community;

(b) the name conflicts with the Division's mission, cultural, or educational goals;

or

(c) the proposed new name is demonstrably more appropriate based on the criteria in subsection (a). Names commemorating individuals, groups, or historic events may not be changed except under the circumstances listed in this subsection.

(d) All permanent signs, plaques, markers, memorials, monuments, and other commemorative installations that bear or recognize the official name of a park or commemorate a person, place, event, or feature within the Territorial Parks System shall conform to the Division's graphic and signage standards. Before any installation is submitted to the Legislature for consideration under this chapter, the Division shall review and approve its design, materials, dimensions, location, and placement for compliance with those standards. All signage and related expenses must be funded from the Territorial Park Trust Fund established under section 31 of this title. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize any person or entity to install, erect, or place any signs, plaques, markers, memorials, monuments, and other commemorative installations within the Territorial Park System except as otherwise authorized by law, nor shall this section apply to routine operational, directional, safety, interpretive, or regulatory signage installed by the Division in the ordinary course of park management.

SECTION 3. (a) Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit the Division from installing, replacing, maintaining, or modifying signage required by federal law, regulation, grant agreement, cooperative agreement, deed restriction, or any other condition of receiving or maintaining federal funding.

(b) Whenever the Division installs, replaces, or modifies signage under subsection (a) of this section, the Division shall provide written notice to the President of the Legislature within 30 days after the installation, replacement, or modification. The notice shall include:

(1) The name and location of the park or property where the signage was installed, replaced, or modified;

(2) The federal agency, program, or funding source requiring the signage;

(3) The statutory, regulatory, grant, or contractual authority requiring the signage;

(4) A brief description of the signage and the reason for its installation, replacement, or modification; and

(5) Whether the signage was funded as a whole or in part with federal funds.

(c) The notice required by this section is for informational and legislative oversight purposes only and shall not be construed to require legislative approval of signage mandated by federal law or imposed as a condition of receiving or maintaining federal funding.

(d) Nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize the naming or renaming of any park, park facility, or other property within the Territorial Parks System except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. Compliance with federal signage requirements shall not alter or supersede the official name of any park or facility established under Virgin Islands law.

SECTION 4. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this act, any real property donated, devised, conveyed, or otherwise transferred to the Government of the Virgin Islands for inclusion in the Territorial Parks System subject to a deed, covenant, restriction, trust instrument, or other legally binding conveyance requiring that the property bear a specified name shall be officially designated and maintained under the name required by such instrument.

(b) The Division shall ensure that all official records, maps, publications, and permanent signage for such property reflect the name required by the governing deed or other legally binding conveyance.

(c) No park or property described in subsection (a) may be renamed except:

(1) as authorized by the terms of the deed or other governing instrument;

(2) with the written consent of any person or entity whose consent is required by the governing instrument; or

(3) by order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

SECTION 5. (a) The Department of Planning and Natural Resources, through the Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas, shall promulgate regulations within 365 days of the effective date of this act to implement section 27 of this act.

(b) The Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation shall coordinate with the Division to ensure all parks and recreational facilities under its management are properly identified and documented under this act.

(c) The Division shall maintain an official registry of all named territorial parks, recreational areas, and facilities, to be updated annually and submitted to the President of the Legislature.

SECTION 6. Nothing in this act shall be construed to:

(1) impair, alter, or supersede any covenant, restriction, condition, or naming requirement contained in a deed, trust instrument, or other legally binding conveyance of real property to the Government of the Virgin Islands; or

(2) affect the authority of the Government of the Virgin Islands to comply with any court order or settlement agreement concerning the ownership, management, or designation of property within the Territorial Park System.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill amends title 32 Virgin Islands Code chapter 2 to establish the Territorial Park Naming Program, creating a standardized process for the naming and renaming of parks, recreational areas, and facilities owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands. The bill sets forth criteria for naming based on geographic, cultural, and historical significance; provides for

public participation and review by the Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas;
requires legislative approval for final naming decisions; and directs the Division to maintain
an official registry of territorial park names.

BR25-0533/December 2, 2025/KEH

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