March 4, 2021

The Honorable Donna M. Frett-Gregory
Senate President
34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building, Charlotte Amalie
P. O. Box 1690
St. Thomas, VI 00804

Re: Virgin Islands Port Authority’s comments on Governor’s Proposal for Amendment to Title 23 Chapter 5

Dear Madam President:

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on the Governor’s Proposal for Amendment to Title 23 Chapter 5 of Virgin Islands Code. It is our understanding that the bill amends Sections 460, 470, and 489, which addresses:

- Reciprocal firearm licensure;
- Declaring firearm upon entrance and leaving the Virgin Islands;
- Reporting of lost or stolen firearms;
- Proper storage of firearms and consequences therefor.

Madam President, due to previous commitment unfortunately I am unable to attend the Senate’s hearing on the date scheduled. However, I would offer the following brief comments which represents the Virgin Islands Port Authority’s position on the bill.

As a secondary law enforcement entity in the Virgin Islands, VIPA will defer to the positions of the Attorney General and the Police Commissioner. We will support their position, and mission since they are the executive agencies that have the lead responsibilities in the enforcement of the firearms laws.

We have reviewed Section 2(c) of the bill, which directs VIPA to establish “substations” at the Port Terminals, for declaration of firearm and ammunition possession by passengers entering and when leaving the territory. We certainly have no objection to this provision. We will continue to work with VIPD to implement the new requirements under this bill when it becomes law.

Pursuant to Act No. 7895 (2016) VIPA has already identified locations within our port terminals for use by VIPD for the registration of firearms when brought into the territory, and we have established a process for coordination between VIPA Police and VIPD firearms division, for implementation of the law. We will be prepared to broaden the activity of the location to accommodate the requirements of this amendment to the law.
As for the provisions of the bill, VIPA defers to the Attorney General and the Police commissioner.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Carlton Dowe  
Executive Director

cc:    Governor Albert Bryan, Jr.