



January 11, 2023

Honorable Milton E. Potter
Chairperson, Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure and Planning
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building
St. Thomas, VI 00802

RE: BILL NO. 35-0172 – BUILDING CODE REVISIONS

Dear Senator Potter:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Bill No. 35-0172 providing for the adoption of nationally recognized consensus-based codes and standards for the Virgin Islands building code. Overall, we appreciate any enhancements to the building code that supports more hardened and resilient buildings in the Territory. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, I could not attend in person but offer the following comments.

While the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) is the lead agency on this matter, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments. We believe this is a necessary step as the Territory must demonstrate to FEMA and other federal partners that we have adopted the most updated industry standards for building code requirements especially considering the impacts climate change and natural disasters will continue to have in our region. The proposed legislation will also allow for DPNR to continue to meet the compliance requirement, as the state level regulator for flood plain management, of NFIP, 44 CFR 60.3, the accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and the Advisory Flood Hazard Resources Map created by FEMA on April 26, 2018.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed legislation. As always, please feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely, .

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Derek Gabriel', written over a printed name.

Derek Gabriel
Commissioner

CC: Donna Frett-Gregory, Senator, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands