



Government of
The Virgin Islands of the United States

VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE POLICE COMMISSIONER



RAY A. MARTINEZ
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POLICE OPERATIONS AND
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Honorable Senator Milton E. Potter
Chairperson, Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure,
& Planning
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building
St. Thomas, VI 00804

LEANDER JURGEN
COMMAND
CRUZ BAY
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Re: Invitation to Provide Testimony Bill No. 35-0202

Dear Senator Potter,

Thank you for providing the Virgin Islands Police Department the opportunity to offer testimony on Bill No. 35-0202, an Act amending Title 29, Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, of the Virgin Islands Code to authorize the Historic Preservation Commission to relax certain restrictions as it relates to conservation and preservation of historic and cultural assets in the historic downtown districts of Christiansted, Frederiksted, Charlotte Amalie and Cruz Bay. Proposed by Senator Kenneth L. Gittens. Unfortunately, due to the timeliness of invite and scheduling conflicts, my Team and I are unable to honor your request today. Kindly accept this correspondence as VIPD's official position on the Bill. We will be more than happy to avail ourselves for future testimony on this matter.

It is well established there are too many derelict, unkept, and abandoned buildings and lots within our historic districts. These areas can foster criminal activity, are unsightly to residents and visitors, and in particular, simply make people feel unsafe. Findings published in the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences and other institutions revealed that remediating these spaces can dramatically affect both perceptions of crime and vandalism and the acts themselves. Here at home, we can infer that areas where vacant lots and buildings are cleaned up will experience reduced criminal activity, vagrancy, illegal dumping, and nuisance complaints. Moreover, the community should report feeling much safer post-remediation.

VIPD stands in support of initiatives that spruce up and make the areas safer. We are all a part of this community and as such hope this legislation will lead to increasing beautification efforts within our historic districts. Cleaner historic districts will further enhance livability and economic vitality.

Please feel free to reach out should you require further information or testimony.

Respectfully,

RAY A. MARTINEZ
Police Commissioner