



**Government of the Virgin Islands
of the United States of America
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs**

www.dlca.vi.gov

Golden Rock Shopping Center
3000 Golden Rock, Suite #9
St. Croix, VI 00820-4311
Telephone: (340) 713-3522
Facsimile: (340) 718-6982

Administrative Complex
"The Battery"
St. John, VI 00830
Telephone: (340) 693-8036
Facsimile: (340) 776-6989

Property & Procurement Building
8201 Sub Base, Suite #1
St. Thomas, VI 00802-5821
Telephone: (340) 714-3522
Facsimile: (340) 776-8303

**H. Nathalie Hodge
Commissioner
Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs**

**Testimony Before the
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands**

**Kenneth L. Gittens, Chair
Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety**

To update the Committee on the Department's Carnival Activities

April 4, 2024

"Serving Businesses & Assisting, Educating and Protecting Consumers"

Good Day Honorable Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Committee Chair, 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety; Committee Senators present, non-Committee Senators present, and the listening and viewing audience.

My name is Horace Graham, Assistant Commissioner for the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, (DLCA). Today, I have the privilege of being joined by Wilbur Francis, our Director of Enforcement.

We are deeply grateful for the opportunity extended to us by this august body to present an update on our Department's comprehensive preparations for the anticipated 2024 St. Thomas Carnival. We aim today to illuminate the efforts and readiness of the DLCA in terms of vendor regulation, operational strategies, and our collaborative endeavors to ensure a seamless and vibrant Carnival this year.

In the realm of public celebrations such as carnivals, festivals, and other significant events, the DLCA traditionally collaborates closely with the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), which possesses the authority under Title 19 V.I.C. sec 2046 to issue special permits for activities at these gatherings. It is our standard practice to facilitate cultural expressions, allowing food and beverage vendors and other

cultural participants to engage fully, given they have received the necessary permissions from the Carnival Committee and/or the VIPD.

In collaboration with the VIPD, the DLCA is dedicating resources to bolster the police presence, acting as force multipliers to counteract potential shortages of law enforcement personnel. Our enforcement officers, operating under the VIPD's guidance, will diligently perform compliance checks daily throughout the Carnival. Our mission is to ensure all vendors are properly licensed or permitted and adhere strictly to the terms of their agreements. Additionally, our officers will tackle the prevention of unauthorized or illicit commercial activities.

Addressing the growing concern of underage drinking and unauthorized alcohol sales, our Alcohol Unit, in partnership with the Enforcement Division, is taking decisive steps. We're actively monitoring social media and other channels for signs of illegal alcohol production aimed at the Carnival audience. Unlicensed alcohol, including jello shots, bottled concoctions, and alcohol pouches, often lacks the required labeling, including alcohol content, posing significant health risks and legal violations.

To mitigate these risks and uphold public safety, the DLCA is intensifying efforts to ensure all entities involved in the production and sale of alcoholic beverages comply with rigorous licensing and labeling standards. We're launching a Public

Service Announcement to emphasize the necessity of registering with the DLCA and the requirement of ensuring proper labeling, which must include a government warning, alcohol percentage (if in excess of 6% of alcohol), volume, and manufacturer details, for all alcoholic products sold publicly.

As the 2024 St. Thomas Carnival approaches, rest assured that our Enforcement Division and Alcohol Unit will be vigilant. We will work with our partner agencies to ensure compliance with the laws of the Virgin Islands and will assist with prioritizing the safety and well-being of all of carnival participants.

We thank you once more for this opportunity to share our initiatives and preparations for a safe and successful St. Thomas Carnival. We remain available to address any questions or further discussions you may wish to pursue.