



| Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance

Legislature USVI

March 6, 2023 · 2.9 hours · gov

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- 0:00:00 Mr. Julio Reimer, Sr., Chief Financial Officer of VIA. Bill number 35-0025, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement and Anthony Isaac, doing business as Ace Trucking and Trash removal. Invited testifiers are Mrs. Lisa M. Alejandro, Acting Commissioner, Department of Property and Procurement, and Mr. Anthony Isaac, owner, Ace Trucking and Trash Removal. Madam Chair, this concludes the reading of the agenda.
- 0:00:45 Thank you Madam Clerk and as I said earlier today we will hear testimony on four leases between the government of the Virgin Islands and all leases are required by law to be ratified by the legislature however please note that the legislature does not have the legal authority to amend any provisions of the leases sent for ratification. So I'm going to ask this morning that the testifiers state your name and title for the record. And we will begin with the representative from the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement, Mr. Vincent Richards. Please place your name and title on the record, Mr. Richards.
- 0:01:40 Good morning Vincent Richards Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement. Okay thank you for that. So Mr. Richards you are representing Acting Commissioner Alejandro for all of the leases that's before us today is correct yes all right okay and who speaks to and the representative for Sun Tech okay so we are unable to hear I believe that's mr. Kevin Rames.
- 0:02:25 Oh yes, Kevin Rames, from St. Croix, representing Suntech as its legal counsel. Okay. Mr. Rames, is there any other representative for Suntech, or is it just you today? No, there is no other representative for Suntech present. Ms. Amanda Peguero regrets that she will not be able to be present as she is attending into a family matter in the Dominican Republic that requires her presence. Okay, thank you.

- 0:02:59 A9 Trucking Inc. and Sarnilli Brothers doing business as a recycling company. Yes, good morning, Your Honor. Please recognize the mic of the testifiers. Good morning. Speak again, let's see if we can hear you. Good morning. Go. Go ahead. Pull the mic closer to your... Good morning, Jennifer Jones on behalf of A9 Trucking Enterprises, Inc. and Sonnelly's Brothers VI doing business as VI Recycling. Okay. Attorney Jones. Yes.
- 0:03:36 All right. And VIA? I'm not seeing VIA here, and I'm also not seeing them on Teams. So we may have to take a recess to figure out what's going on with that. As we said, we're doing one block. And then we also have two fine gentlemen in front of us this morning. Anthony Isaac, doing business as age trucking and trash removal. Please put your name and title, your name on the record and the entity that you're representing. You may begin first. Kadeem Benjamin, partner in Ace Trucking and Trash Removal. And that's K-A-D-E-E-M Benjamin. Correct. And you are a part owner?
- 0:04:22 Yes. And? My name is Anthony Isaac, owner of Ace Trucking and Trash Removal. All right, well thank you all for being here. here and I believe that we're ready to proceed. I really don't want to take a recess. I need to proceed with the meeting. I will allow VAIA to regroup and get themselves together and then they could put their name on the record but we're going to start with the representative from the virgin islands department of property and procurement mr vincent richards you may proceed with your testimony uh good morning good morning committee chair donna a fred gregory vice chair novelli francis jr committee members senators blyden carrion de graf fonseca and James Sr., non-committee members, legislative staff, fellow testifiers, visitors and members of a listening and viewing audience. I am Vincent Richards, Deputy Commissioner of the Property and Procurement Printing and Property Division of the Virgin Islands. I appear today on behalf of Acting Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro to offer testimony on the proposed lease agreements for St. Thomas, St. John, and the St. Croix districts, which are all before this committee for consideration. I'm here today to request this committee's and ultimately the full Senate's approval of the lease agreements between the government of the Virgin Islands and Sun Tech Group
- 0:06:15 Incorporated, doing business as St. Thomas Gas, A9 Trucking Enterprise Incorporating and Sarnelli Brothers Incorporated doing business as the VI Recycling Company. The Virgin Islands Telephone Corporation doing business as VIA and finally Anthony Isaac doing business as Ace Trucking and Trash Removal. These leases require the legislative approval in accordance with 31 Virgin Islands Code, subsection 205 . The terms all commence on the first day of the month following the approval of the Governor and the Legislature of the Virgin Islands. All lease agreements require a minimum of \$1 million for all limits of public liability coverage.
- 0:07:12 As the premises owner, DPP or the Department of Property and Procurement, will be required to execute all permits required for the premises. These four potential lessees have provided the required documentation to support the processing of their lease agreements with the government, including but not limited to their business license and certificates of good standing. The lease agreement between Suntec and the government of the Virgin Islands is for Parcel number four submarine base number six south side quarter st thomas united states virgin islands consisting of approximately 27 732 square feet or point zero six three seven u.s acres of land the property will be used for operating a trucking transportation and delivery and retail business for bottled propane gas and no other purposes whatsoever.
- 0:08:13 The term of this agreement is for 10 years, and the lease agreement provides for two additional renewal options of five years each. The annual rent for the above reference partial would be \$54,000, payable in equal monthly installments of \$4,500 during the term of this lease. The rent payable under the lease agreement will be adjusted after the first year and every year thereafter, including any renewal term in accordance with the consumer price index. Increases establishes by the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics subject to a 3% cap in the increases each year. The lease agreement between VI Recycling and the government of the Virgin Islands for an unimproved portion of parcel number 1-19, Estate Bovoni, numbers 1 and 2, Frenchman's Bay Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 247,061 U.S. square feet or 5.67 acres of land.
- 0:09:32 The property will be used to operate a scrap metal collection and sales business and for other related purposes. The terms of the agreement is for 10 years and the lease agreement provides for two renewal options of five years each. The annual rent for the above referent partial would be \$54,000, payable in equal monthly installments of \$4,500 during the terms of a lease. The rent payable under the lease agreement will be adjusted after the fifth year and every year thereafter, including any renewal terms in accordance with the consumer price index increases established by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, subject to a 3% cap in the increases each year. The lease agreement between VIA and the government of the Virgin Islands is for a portion of a telecommunication tower and bunker in building number one, suite number two, parcel number six, estate recovery hill, company quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands.
- 0:10:42 The lease would be used, the lessee would use a portion of the telecommunication tower for the establishment and operation of a wireless link connection and a nine by eight room bunker for the purpose of housing associated equipment and no other purpose the term of the lease agreement is for 10 years and the lease agreement provides for two renewal

options of five years each the The annual rent for the above reference parcel will be \$36,000, payable in equal monthly installments of \$3,000 during the term of the lease. The rent payable on the lease agreement will be adjusted after the first year and every year thereafter, including any renewal term in accordance with the Consumer Price Index established by the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, subject to a 3% cap each year.

0:11:45 Finally, the lease agreement between Ace Trucking and the Government of Virgin Islands is for parcel number 124, Subbase, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 33,050 square feet or .758 US acres of improved land. The property will be used for operating a garbage removal, trucking, transportation, and delivery business and for other related purposes. The term of the lease agreements for 10 years and the lease agreement provides for two additional renewal options of five years each. The annual rent for the above reference parcel will be \$24,000 payable in equal monthly installments of \$2,000 during the term of the lease.

0:12:34 The lease agreement will include a construction period 36 months, during which a lessee will complete improvements to the premises. During the construction period, the lessee will pay a reduced rent of \$500 per month for the first 24 months and \$1,000 per month for the 24th month to the 36th month. The rent payable under this lease agreement will be adjusted after the first year and every year thereafter, including any renewal terms in accordance with the Consumer Price index increase established by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, subject to a 3% cap in increase each year.

0:13:20 These proposed lease agreements will provide locally owned businesses the needed security and commitment to invest and reinvest in their properties as well as expand and improve their operations. The properties will eventually be returned to the government of the Virgin Islands at the end of their lease terms and improved conditions. These businesses will continue to provide critical services and contribute to the long-term recovery and economic growth of the United States Virgin Islands. The Department of Property and Procurement respectfully requests that the 34th legislature of the virgin islands committee on budget 35th i'm sorry i read wrong i well bear with me you're getting old um the 35th legislature of the united states virgin islands committee on budget appropriation and finance uh vote in favor of these proposed lease agreements this concludes my prepared uh testimony and i'm prepared to answer any question the committee may have on the reference lease agreement thank you thank you mr. Richards the representative for Sun tech group Inc mr. attorney Kevin Reims you may proceed with your testimony before you proceed let me recognize the presence of senator college a Joseph non committee member thank you for being here senator attorney Ramsey may proceed with your testimony good morning mr. president madam chair members of the committee on budget appropriations and finance a legislative staff other testifiers and members of the general public my name is Kevin Rames and I'm counsel for Sun tech which is a company that does business in the u.s. Virgin Islands on st. Thomas as st. Thomas gas and on st.

0:15:18 Croy as St. Croix Gas. In this particular instance, with respect to bill number 350017, St. Thomas Gas, the proposed lessee, has been operating at the sub-base location since 1968. The current owners have owned the company since 1990. The formal name for the company, again, is sun tech group inc the company provides services to st thomas consumers under the trade name st thomas gas and provide services on st croix to its consumers under the trade name st croix gas the lease under consideration today is for the st thomas location at sub base the company has only one line of business which is the retail sale of liquefied petroleum gas for governmental commercial, and residential customers throughout the United States Virgin Islands.

0:16:15 St. Thomas Gas has been at the current location again since its formation as a company in 1968. This lease will extend the existing term of its tenancy at the same site. Suntech has a similar site near the former Hatch Refinery on the south shore of St. Croix. The company has nine employees on st croix and six employees on st thomas the company is the main provider of liquefied natural gas for several governmental entities including the department of education the bureau of corrections and the department of human services among others the company is also very competitive in the local commercial and residential liquefied natural gas market in the future the ownership of the and management of sun tech sees itself as benefiting from the continued economic growth in the territory while increasing its market share across its entire consumer base um thank you that is the extent of my testimony thank you attorney rames uh the representative for A9 Trucking Inc. and Sarniel Brothers Virgin Islands Incorporated doing business as VA recycling company attorney Jennifer Jones you may proceed with your testimony thank you good morning chairwoman of the 35th please recognize the testifiers mic or pull the mic closer you good morning good morning chairwoman of the 35th legislature's committee on budget appropriations and finance other committee members non-committee members legislative staff present the members of the viewing and listening audience i am jennifer jones i'm legal counsel for a9

0:18:08 Trucking Enterprises, and Sonnelly Brothers Inc. doing business as VI Recycling. VI Recycling is the lessee of the proposed lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Planning, I'm sorry, the Department of Property and Procurement, and A9 Trucking Enterprises and

Sonnely Bro Inc. doing business as VI Recycling. For parcel number 1-19, Estate Bovoni, numbers 1 and 2, Frenchman's Bay Quarter, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. A9 Trucking and Sonnely Bro VI formed VI Recycling as a fully licensed Virgin Islands partnership in 2004. VI Recycling provides recycling services for the government of the Virgin Islands, primarily in processing and recycling the territory's scrap metal. VI Recycling also performs demolition and dismantling as well as hazardous waste removal services for various Virgin Islands agencies and private entities. Since 2004, VI Recycling has processed and transported more than 250,000 metric tons of scrap metal out of the territory to its shredder steel mill in the mainland for final processing and recycling into steel. VI Recycling is proud of the significant impact it has made to the Virgin Islands both in terms of providing a vital solution for waste disposal service and in helping the territory to achieve two critical environmental goals. One is to reduce a significant waste product and the second is to protect the environment by allowing for recycling of scrap metal waste into steel. For a territory with limited land space for waste disposal, these achievements are critical factors in advancing economic growth and contributing to the overall good health and welfare of this territory. BI Recycling, however, cannot continue

0:20:17 providing these vital services without the certainty of a long-term lease. The purpose of the lease is to allow VI Recycling to continue to operate a processing facility on parcel number 1-19, Estate Bovone, to collect, process and sell scrap metals. Parcel number 1-19 is located at the Bovone Landfill and is sufficiently close to other waste disposal operations to make the location unique and necessary for VI Recycling Operations. The lease will ensure the sustainability of VI recycling's operations and the performance of a critical function of the government. As for the lease terms, those are mutually beneficial to recycle VI recycling and the government of the Virgin Islands. The lease went through a long and thoughtful negotiation process. The standard provisions for all government contracts are contained in the contract as well. We now conclude our testimony, but remain open to responding to any of your questions. And I believe Kevin Rothler, who is the managing partner of BI Recycling, is also on Teams at this time.

0:21:34 We thank you for giving us this opportunity to make our presentation to you today. Thank you. Thank you, Attorney Jones. It appears as if we are having some challenges with Teams, because there's no one up on Teams, So I'm going to take a quick two minute recess so we could clearly understand what's happening. The committee stands in recess for two minutes. Thank you.

0:22:48 ¶¶ Thank you. Thank you. Oh, my God.

0:24:47 Thank you. so so Thank you.

0:26:47 Thank you. Thank you.

0:27:47 Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Thank you. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

0:30:17 The committee on budget appropriations and finance is back on the record. heard, apparently we are having technical difficulties with teams. When I left here on Friday, we did not get one request for teams. So if the teams does not work today, we're going to have to remove Rubaya from the agenda. We need to move on with this meeting, move on with this meeting, and I am going to ask the representatives. So Attorney Jones, it appears that you asked for someone else to come up and...

0:31:32 Yes, Kevin Ruffler, he's the manager who can address technical questions with regard of the senators. Okay, well, did you guys request this before? I'm sorry no not until this morning that's a challenge so you know when we have our meetings it's important that we know what's before us so our technical staff can make the necessary adjustments that's how our meetings flow effectively so we're gonna go to the next testifiers which is so virus not here and at some point if they don't get up on teams when this testimony is done we're going to make a motion to remove them from the agenda. So I'm gonna go to who's testifying on behalf of Ace Trucking and Trash Removal? I am Kadeem Benjamin. You have to speak up a little bit. Kadeem Benjamin. Okay Mr. Benjamin you may proceed with your testimony. Good morning Honourable Dona Fred Gregory, chairperson is coming to you on budget appropriations and finance and the 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands. We at Ace Tracking and Trash Removal request the lease on parcel number 124, Subbase St. Thomas, VI, and that we have a lease renewal for long-term.

0:33:14 Ace Trucking has been serving the Virgin Islands and the community in partnership with another trucking company for over 25 years. In 2018, Mr. Isaac and myself took it upon ourselves to move forward and created Ace Trucking and Trash Removal Services. And we have been continuing serving the Virgin Islands. Since we started working in 2018, we've been working hand-in-hand with the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority and striving to keep the community clean. We asked the 35th legislature to extend the contract for the lease on parcel number 124 Subway St. Thomas. As we press forward we have the aim in which we would like to continue to expand our businesses on st. Thomas and throughout the Virgin Islands also in helping to employ individuals and continue to keep the island clean as much as possible and we thank you for the time Thank you for your testimony. Again, we're not seeing via on teams. We're going

to proceed with the meeting. I would like to share that for the Department of Property and Procurement as well as the testifiers, we've asked our post audit division to prepare a summary of the leases that's before us today. All senators should have received a copy of the summary of the leases and within our summary of the leases we have indicated the present value of the revenue, the potential revenue of the leases that's

0:35:15 before us, basically with using the CPI multiplier as well as a, there's also another table using the average inflation rate as to the potential revenue of these leases before us. Over the years we've approved leases without really having a true perspective on what the leases are worth to the GVIA. So as we look at the lease for SunTech Group, we see that the, based on the calculation of the inflation rate, this lease is, present value could be worth up to four. The current present value is \$502,000 with the CPI multiplier and the present value and inflation, it could be up to some \$403,000. So there is fluctuating because money today doesn't look like money tomorrow. So these are things that we have to consider as we contemplate these leases so as we go through them I'm just asking my colleagues to look at the analysis as it relates to the cost of money and the present value of these leases and how inflation will impact these leases that's before us down the road. Colleagues, we have three entities before us, and we're going to hear from them.

0:37:09 Because we've moved to one block, they believe that's seven minutes. Seven minutes? I'm always in tune with the consensus. So we're going to move to a seven minute round for all of these leases that's before us with hopes that at some point VIA would be able to get on. If they're unable to get on, then somewhere in the middle we're going to have to make a motion to remove VIA from today's agenda. And we will, as we have the discussion, we will definitely look at the, like I said, the inflation rate, the present value, et cetera, of the leases that's before us. There is one lease that's before us where I think it is, is it via recycling? Yes, it's via recycling. This lease was sent down in the 34th legislature and it has since been resent, because it was not heard, sent down I believe in November of 2022 and we are noting that the business license has since expired so I wish to ask Mr. Vincent Richards do we have an updated business license for VI recycling? Senator good morning good question yes we do yes we do. Can we please have a copy of it before we make our final decision here today.

0:38:45 I will have it sent to me or sent to you and your staff. We need to have that, please. Okay, and that helps us as we, this is why it's important for us to do these analysis so senators will be aware as to what, exactly what's before us and what's missing and from what's not missing, okay? All right, so colleagues, we're going to a seven-minute round. And we're going to start with our President of the Institution, Senator Nova Lee Francis Junior. Senator Francis, you're recognized for your seven minutes.

0:39:26 Oh, I'm sorry. I believe that's Senator... Thank you very much. I'm sorry, Senator. Senator Joseph, did you ask for a point of inquiry? Yeah, you might proceed with your point of inquiry. One minute, Senator. My apologies. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I did say softly, but I'm glad that you heard it and remembered. Pleasant good day to everyone. I wanted to ask a question before we jump in to our line of questioning with property and procurement. I noted that the Attorney General's office indicated that the department has not submitted an appraisal report. And I know you're not required to present three appraisal report, but I do want to ask, when was the last appraisal done for any of these properties to determine its value? Because the chairwoman talked about the value of the dollar, so we want to assure that we are getting the best value for these properties. We understand that these are small businesses, and we want to assure that we're doing our very best to promote small business enterprise. but Mr. Richards, if you could kindly indicate for us when the properties have been appraised, and when was the last appraisal of any of the properties here?

0:40:49 Good question, Senator, good morning. Vincent Richards, Property and Procurement. One particular property here was appraised or reappraised, and that was the St. Thomas Gas. I would answer that by saying that previously, St. Thomas Gas was paying a rate of \$1,500 to the government of the Virgin Islands, and now they're going to be paying a rate of \$4,500 per month to the Virgin Islands. So that's almost a three-fold increase for the St. Thomas Gas property, which was appraised. So that one specifically was appraised, and I could get you a copy of the appraisal report if you give me, through the chair.

0:41:32 Specifically... Through the chair, yes. be provide the appraisal report because the appraisals have a life span of about six months typically six months that's what a licensed appraisal indicated to us here to me so the property appraisals will be helpful for us to assure that we are doing the very best and justice for the government property thank you madam chair thank you senator joseph and again um i think the senator's question is appropriate and that is why it's so important for us to have these analyses so we could know what's before us so um just for future reference um we will continue to conduct these post-addit analyses so if we have issues with expired leases please ensure that once you're coming before the committee that you bring the information if you don't have it prior to the meeting okay yes all right so we're going to start with senator again senator mrs mr president senator nova lee francis jr you're recognized for your seven minutes thank you very much madam chair good morning to you my colleagues uh good morning to the representative here uh and from

this opportunity to be able to make these measures before us because it's through economic development senator senator senator senator Senator Francis, we are having technical difficulties on this end. We cannot hear you.

0:43:17 Please hold the senator's time. Put the senator's time back. Let's hear you again. Don't start running his time until we get this straightened out. Could you speak, Senator, so we could hear you and hear what's happening? Because you're coming choppy. Good morning, Madam Chair. This is the mic. Yeah, we're going to have to take a recess. We really need to test these, do the tests prior to our meetings. This is a little frustrating when we get to this point and this is occurring. The committee stands in recess for two minutes.

0:44:05 Thank you. Thank you.

0:45:05 It's the nature of mine. It's the earth, man. Rasta, man. And El Solatziado for. J robots. What is a rasta man? The man where state and the plan. The man where country streets. Love and bless up everyone Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back.

0:48:58 G-SX Polar Channel Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. The Legion Well try it Well try it Well try it That's what I have said Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll see you next time. yes We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

1:02:04 This is you. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. Thank you.

1:05:34 This is your life. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you very much.

1:11:04 the committee on budget appropriations and finance is back on the record we really want to apologize for the technical difficulties that we're experiencing today we are experiencing issues with our bandwidth so we have to be mindful of the use of the bandwidth internally within the institution when we have these meetings so hopefully we've been able to address that issue with our bandwidth challenges because you know there's just so much going on there's lots of work going on so let's see if we can regroup on this but I since learned that attorney Kevin Rames so I'm gonna ask the first speaker senator Novali Francis Jr. to hold off because I understand that attorney Kevin Reims will speak on behalf of VAIR. So we want to thank him for stepping up to the plate. Attorney Reims you may proceed with your testimony on the telecommunica- the portion of the telecommunication tower and bunker in building number one suite to process number six recovery hill company quarter st croix you may proceed on behalf of thank you chair honorable chair fred gregory members of the committee members of the 35th legislature and their staff and the listening and viewing audience my name is kevin rames and i'm speaking on behalf of paul karubas the senior director of corporate affairs for the virgin islands telephone corporation and its wireless affiliate by telecom cellular inc known locally as via i'm appearing today as council for via to speak to you in support of the lease for a portion of the telecommunications tower and bunker at building number one suite two of parcel six estate recovery hill company quarter at st croix us virgin islands consisting of a telecommunications tower and a nine foot by eight foot room and bunker all zone p for public as this committee

1:13:27 knows via produces a full suite of telecommunications and entertainment services for both business and residential markets including wireline and wireless voice services fixed and mobile broadband and cable television services offered over a hybrid fiber coaxial wireless network and state-of-the-art wireless network serving st. Croix st. Thomas and st. John via maintains a 150 foot tower with seven antennas on recovery hill to provide wireless services to the areas including christianstead the state humbug south side road grain beast oh and captain's rep and lowry hill your lease that is before the legislature at this time The plan allows us to implement long-term investments, including 5G services.

1:14:38 The network will maintain high-quality services for buyers. This lease is the result of productive discussions with the staff of the Department of Property and Procurement. VIA appreciates their hard work, education, and professionalism. The lease includes an option for two additional five-year terms, which is consistent with industry standards throughout the territory, as well as in the mainland United States. The Attorney General's Office has a firm that VIA has been withstanding with all of its licenses and permits and supporting documents.

1:15:20 They were all, of course, included in the package of material shared with the committee. I would also note that VIA has numerous pieces with the Department of Property and Procurement, and it's always been a good tenant in good standing. VIA appreciates the committee's consideration of this lease and the request of approval. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of VIA, and I'm available to answer your questions concerning this lease agreement. Thank you.

1:15:56 Okay, so the struggle is real, so the first senator, I believe it was Senator Nova Lee Francis to speak, but he had to step out of the room, and I'm not seeing Senator james is senator carrion senator carrion are you uh i think i'm seeing senator

carrion since are carrying you recognized for your seven minutes and thank you mr reams attorney reams thank you yes you may proceed thank you madam chair good morning to you good to my colleagues there's end of you in a listening audience yes virgin islands I do have a few questions, like always it's great to have you for us business owners and entrepreneurs and partners within the business sector that want to.

1:17:04 Okay, Senator Carrion, Senator Carrion. Senator Carrion. Yes, ma'am. I think the boogeyman has got us today. We can hardly hear the information coming out of St. Croix. You are breaking up. We just took a recess.

1:17:33 We really need to get through with these leases. However it's extremely difficult for our sonographer and of course the viewing audience to hear what we're talking about today coming from the other end. What we're gonna do is until hopefully we'll get the issues with the bandwidth resolved so I'm gonna start with please the senator's time start over but what we're gonna do until we could see if you could free up some bandwidth issues that we have in our chambers and in our committee room in the St. Croix district, we are going to start with the senators in the St. Thomas St. John district. So Senator James Sr., we're gonna start with him and then we're gonna go to Senator DeGraff, no, Senator Fonseca, then we'll try again and if that doesn't work then we'll go to the other senators and see if we could catch up on the other end, but we need to move forward with this meeting so that's the way we're going to proceed today so senators please bear with us as we have to make a few changes with who goes first second and third etc and let's see if we could work together to to to accommodate the testifiers as before us this morning so senator Giovanni James senior we're going to recognize you now for your seven minutes so you may proceed thank you thank you madam chair greetings to the people of the u.s. Virgin Islands I don't think I will need my entire seven minutes because I think this block is straightforward first off I want to say thank you to all the business owners who we have before us today thank you for your service to the people of the u.s. Virgin Islands and I think most of these are just asking for an extension however while I was going through the documents I think is for is trucking and trash removal i'm just gonna ask property and procurement i saw where the certificate of liability insurance is that up to par good morning uh vincent richards property and procurement uh as of submission there it was uh it was current um but i can tell you that we do inspect our properties every 30 days and that is something that we will be looking for and that is required to be up to date every time

1:20:11 we go and inspect every 30 days so um as of submittal it was it was current okay because i saw here february 12 2023 so just stay on top of that and another thing is through the analysis This one post added in reference that no certificate of good standing was included in the packet. I'm not sure if that was submitted. Was it submitted? For which tenant, Senator, please? It is trucking and trash removal.

1:20:50 According to the report, I'm sorry, I'm looking at the wrong report. So, while he's looking for that information, let me just make it clear, I have no issues helping smart businesses in the territory, we just want to make sure we have our ducks in a row, so don't take it as me going against the grain, but we just want to make sure that things need to be submitted, and based on the post-added analysis, no certificate of good standing was included in a packet so senator if i may answer um i mean factually you cannot get a business license unless you have a certificate of good standing so i'm assuming assuming if they have a current business license that they did at the time of submit or have a certificate of good standing makes sense of course but we still want to see that document but you're right absolutely correct and as far as a9 trucking enterprises i know we had a list of stuff that were expiring in 2022 and i'm not sure if anyone asked that before but um at the time of submittal most of them was in june certificate of good standing june 30 2022 but long story short the business license 10 31 2022 is when it expired so i'm assuming that it's up to par and based on what you said earlier you know to get a business license you have to have a letter of good standing yes senator okay but as far as i'm submitting updated records just just submit updated records to us yes senator um i believe uh i was asked previously about one for uh vi recycling and i've since submitted a copy to the to the chair no problem and as far as via i really I don't want to really have any questions for Vaya, it's straightforward.

1:22:44 My son, Tech, I hope everything is okay. As far as Ms. Amanda Peguero, I know you mentioned, or in the testimony it was mentioned that she has to attend to Family Matters, and I hope everything is all right. Like I say, I look forward to supporting all these three measures. It's a no-brainer. And thank you once again for your service and your willingness to do business for the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands. thank you madam chair thank you uh senator james let's just ask the um the business owners um via recycling i believe that the certificate of liability insurance and the certificates of good standing based on the information that we have expired in 6 of 22 do you have updated documents or i keep forgetting who's who my apologies yes we submitted um we submitted the business license um we can as well um get the certificate of insurance liability um i believe under the the um the terms of the lease which is typical we have to make sure that that's done within 30 days but there are ongoing concerns so they do have the insurance we can make sure that we get those to them if it's not part of the record so that we are clear right um so that we're clear these are businesses that are ongoing right these are not new businesses yes okay so while I hear what you said these documents should be up to date because

this is like not a new lease or a new entity coming online correct yeah yes

- 1:24:47 um yeah and so if you can ask them to please send the information over we would appreciate it before we make our decisions i'm going to ask the same question of um a stroking and trash removal um your certificate of liability and your certificate of good standing do you have that information yes and they are up to date they're up to date yes and uh mr Mr. Richards, do you have those in your possession?
- 1:25:19 Actually here, right now, my possession, no, I do not, Senator. No, no, no, not here, in your possession. At the office, yes, Senator. Can you please have them sent over? That's the post audit report that we shared with you includes all of the deficiencies. So we would need to get them so we could ensure that our package is complete. So once we send them forward to the Rules Committee, everything will be included so we can make decisions based on the information that's before us, okay? We'll do, Senator.
- 1:25:48 All right. Senator Fonseca, you're recognized for your seven minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair, and pleasant good morning to all the listening audience, the testifiers before us today, Mr. Vincent Richards, Property and Procurement, Attorney Jennifer Jones, A9, Kevin Raines, Veya, and of course we got Kadeem Benjamin and Anthony Isaac.
- 1:26:28 You know, it's so welcoming to actually have a very complete package before you so that we can review and give our consent. You know, congratulations have to go to all of those involved in preparing this package that's before us today. I am very encouraged. I like it when we have such a good package. You know, of course, part of the items that are required is your business license, your certificate of good standing, your trade name, registration, your certificate of minimum one million dollars liability. So I am definitely going to be relying on the testimony of Mr. Vincent Richards. Madam Chair just a question about having all of those current and Mr. Richards, it's your testimony that all of those are current for all of these businesses?
- 1:27:32 Yes, Senator. The Department of Property and Procurement, through our property inspection program on a monthly basis, visits each and every one of our tenants and in our checklist, business license, as well as different licenses that are required to be current or checked. not normal to ask a business for their certificate of good standing because it's understood that a certificate of good standing is required to have to have a business license so it's not one of those business it's not one of those documents that are required to be posted in your business but a business license is uh the superseding document that that is required thank you thank you mr richards um and you know i want to also point out that all of these businesses here before us today actually have been doing business in the territory for a long time until these gas i noticed it was 1968 um and i and i'm i'm so encouraged when we have locals um coming before us um i wanted I wanted to go to page six, particularly with St. Thomas Gas, Sun Tech, with the fire and extended coverage. That particular one requires that all buildings on the premises are insured against loss or damage by fire, wind, storm and earthquake. earthquake, and particularly being that that's a gas company, is that building insured against fire and earthquake and windstorm? Yes, Senator, particularly, yes, yes, yes, Senator, in a nutshell.
- 1:29:29 And then also I'd like to ask Mr. Kevin Raines about VIA. via also on page six is that insured for fire uh earthquake and and windstorm uh yes yes senator it is it required uh not only for this you know various contracts with it does keep a full slate up church cup okay thank you mr rensa you're breaking up a little bit i think we have a little communication issue but i did hear clearly that uh your answer was yes and you know at the appropriate time um i will definitely um be making a favorable um vote um you know i'm it's so welcoming to have local businesses that have been here doing business and all of you are this decent respectable hard working and i congratulate this madam chair thank Thank you very much, I return my time. Thank you, Senator Fonseca.
- 1:30:37 Just a follow-up on the Senator's line of questioning. So all of the leases that's before us or the leases that come before us, the limited liability coverage for all is 1 million, all is \$1 million, irregardless of the potential liability issues of the business? The minimum is \$1 million.
- 1:31:04 Okay, so do you, for instance, in the case of Suntech, do you require them to have a liability insurance that's more than the million? We haven't required it in this particular document, but we've seen their insurance policy and it covers a lot more than a million dollars. I believe it starts somewhere south of like five plus million dollars. I asked a question because of the type of business.
- 1:31:36 This is a company that's providing, what do you call it, L, let's just say gas. Propane gas. Propane gas. Liquified propane. Liquified propane gas, so I would imagine that from the Department of Property and Procurements and that consideration should be given for a higher limited liability coverage. All businesses are not created equal, and decisions need to be made. I mean, certainly they are good business people, so they recognize the importance of, and it looks like we're not seeing St. Croix anymore. We see Mr. Reims, okay.

- 1:32:23 We recognize the importance of, they recognize the importance of having a higher limited liability coverage based on your testimony. But from the government's end, I think it's important for the government as well to look at the overall liability of the businesses and make some different determinations. I just don't think the requirement of a million dollars coming from the government to them is sufficient. That should be part of the discussion as you move your leases forward. So let's keep that in mind as we do our work.
- 1:33:05 Senator DeGraff, are you ready? You're recognized for your seven minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, testifiers, all of you, and listeners, and present. I was asking to one of my questions about the insurance also. St. Thomas Gas, Suntech is on the backside or the front side of Antilles Gas. They're next door to each other.
- 1:33:35 Okay, and that was one of my concerns in regards to the insurance being a million dollars. You have two gas companies back to back. and i know um back in the 70s you know they had a major disaster in the area not to put it on any of these businesses but again um you know so and like you said a north of five million so that's that's good to hear do any of these leases um renewals have any liens on them have any liens liens correct currently no no okay good um who asked for the terms of um the leases 10 years two five year that was what property procurement is offering or that's what they requested uh we we start at 10 years as a as a as a start but some some business models require or request more based on their capital investment based on other mitigating factors okay because I know we are looking at a 10-year renewal. So for Ace, are you good with 10-year, 5-year renewal, 2-5-year or you're looking more? As it stands right now, we're fine with the 10-year. Okay.
- 1:34:48 Cool. And also for all the other entities, fine with the 10-year, 2-5-year renewals? If you could answer, yeah. For your entity, Suntech, you're good. You're with A9, right? Yes. So for A9, are you good with a 10-year, two, five-year? Yes. Okay. It's a 10-year. Okay. I learned you're good with them, and I don't know if the other sink right in is down right now. Okay. Also, Mr. or Deputy Commissioner, as a part of the contract, do you do an inflation where you add the CPI as indicated in this analysis here is what what what percentages do you use for that we we follow the um the consumer price index uh by the department of labor bureau of labor statistics or statistics and um that number is capped the increases are capped at three percent so we can't raise the rent more than three percent annually and in normal times it floats somewhere about 1.5 two percent uh i believe last year it was extraordinary and i believe inflation moved somewhere like eight percent six to eight percent so but either which way it'll be capped at three percent annually okay so with the post analysis analysis you have a copy of that yes i do okay And so then those numbers used in that part of the post-auditor's analysis confirms with what's in the contract?
- 1:36:32 Yes, it appears that way. OK, because that's good information because normally we don't get that consumer price index shown. But since it's already added into the contract and signed off, it's good information to have and possibly even have prior to. Again, now for VIA, I don't know, again, the gentleman for VIA, when you talk about having the, in a bunker, nine feet by eight feet, could you describe how that is, a concrete bunker, a shell, or is a, as a base for the tower, or is it a facility that they could store equipment in?
- 1:37:22 Yeah, okay, you can ask that. Yeah, guess what? The property in question, the tower is owned by the government of the Virgin Islands and it allows people to put their antennas on the tower. There's also a bunker at the base of the tower where all the telecommunication equipment is held and in the bunker it has little rooms that allows different it allows uh prospective telecommunication company to place their prospective equipment into the suites within the bunker okay and they're renting one of the suites in the inside of the bunker facility okay got it got it and again i can say existing already yes and i think finally for the for Ace A9 and Suntech. Basically what is your future model for expansion or maintaining of see we get these properties and we keep them as a trash mover place and it stays in one way for 10 years and extended 5 years and 5 years. do you have any expansion in mind for upgrading your facility or for more trucks or putting in a building for mechanics, also for ACE in forward as to how you're ready to stay in one way for years so is there anything in your plans going forward, and if not, it's not but I just would like to ask that to the individuals well as for vi recycling i'm not aware of any plans for expansion at this point
- 1:39:12 um one minute yeah i believe that the the revenue stream is sort of constant and the lease certainly does not provide at this time for any um facility construction to be to okay good um ace um as far for ace we do plan on expanding um one of the things we do plan on looking into is also with more equipment as well as working with other offshore 30 seconds when it comes to recycling the island more with both plastic and cardboard which this that is one of the largest factors is what has the growth in the landfill so that is one of our plans for expansion okay great and that's good to hear and uh again i can say i don't know if anyone here is for the sun tech to pass on no okay so thank you for the time madam chair all right thank you uh Just for the sake of the discussion, as we contemplate the CPI multiplier in particular, I'm going to ask the post auditor to share how we came up with the CPI multiplier.

- 1:40:33 There is some historical, he looked at it from a historical perspective and then came forward, but I want to give him an opportunity to share with the testifiers, as well as the listener, viewing audience, how we came up with the information that's before us today. You may May I proceed, Mr. Post-Editor? Thank you very much, Mr. Post-Editor. Testing, thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. The contracts speak to the use of the Consumer Price Index. What I actually did was to go back historically and say, if we were to apply the formula that is given in the contracts, contracts, what would be the multiplier? What a contract does, it says that the rate will be adjusted based on the year before consumer price index numbers, talk about a base rate and a current rate. When you use those two rates and you find the quotients of those two rates, you divide the current rate by the base rate, you'll get what is called a multiplier. And the multiplier is what they use to calculate the increase in your in the in the rents in the rents you will see that um i for historically in let's try 2022 the multiplier would be 1.06 1.0658 and if you multiply your current rate by that number that will give you your new annual rate if you divide the new annual rate by 12 you will get the monthly rate so what we did because we don't know what the consumer price index will be going forward because that's future i basically tried to figure out what it was in the past and i said that historically if i was to use historic historic uh data to and to kind of adjust the the rents i will know what the rents will be what is very interesting is that the multiplier for 2022 which is 1.0658 if you look at that it really speaks to about in 2022 the the rent would have been increased by about 6.5 percent and if you go across the table you would see what the average inflation rate for 2022 based on the labor the bureau of labor statistics it would have been very high 2022 inflation was eight percent on average uh you the quoted rate what you usually see for inflation is 6.5 but the average inflation rate across all 12 months was about eight percent and if i was to apply the the multiplier in that year that would have meant that your rent would have increased by 6.5 which would have been less than both the stated rate for inflation and the the average inflation rate. One other thing that is also interesting is that if you go back to maybe 2013, we see in 2013 inflation was about 1.5 percent. The rate that they state is 1.5 percent, but if it was to use a multiplier, we would have only adjusted by about 1.3 percent. So it's very interesting. I think that this calculation is actually beneficial to the companies because their increases always below the inflation rate. Madam Chair I hope that is a good explanation.
- 1:44:16 Thank you. Thank you so much and absolutely it is. It's important that we at the end of the day as we make these decisions we are able to see how the government is actually doing and what revenues they're actually generating from these leases and what revenues they can potentially generate from these leases so most definitely important information so let's see if we can go now to our colleagues in the St. Croix district I'm not seeing let's see who's there I believe I'm seeing Senator oh that's Senator Carrion didn't go so let's try again Senator Carrion you're recognized for your seven minutes we're not hearing you at all now Good afternoon to you, to my colleagues, good afternoon to the testifiers and the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands. I think one of the things I like about when we have these hearings is the fact that it's always good to hear and see our business sector coming forward, engaging, renewing leases, or new businesses that are opening and starting. So that's always exciting to hear.
- 1:45:34 this case we have renewals before us. I don't really have much to really ask. I stand in support of each of the bills but I do have just a few questions. Regards to bill number 35-0018, A-9 Truck and Enterprise. I know you're currently doing just metal recycling and I think I heard you mention a little bit can you tell us what are your plans of expansion to other type of recycling products I'm not aware I'm not aware plans to increase the the types of services but they do offer a wide variety of environmental services in in terms of transporting certain types of environmental wastes off-island, especially wastes that cannot be stored in the landfills. But, so I think it already incorporates a full gamut of the type of environmental waste that can be transported.
- 1:46:48 But in terms of the other things besides the demolition and the removal of the scrap metal items, At this point, that really is the bulk of its business and that really carries a lot of opportunity for the business to be fully versatile as it is. So I don't think that right now, as I know, that there is no other facility. As I explained before, within the lease itself, within the next 10 years, there's no plans for construction. If there is, we always have an opportunity to amend the release to allow for a new or different type of facility. But that's what the company specializes in and that's what it will continue to do at very best of its ability for the next 10 years understand that the property is unimproved portion parcel it's not developed um so what it be what it will be used for is it storage is it parking is it um what what will be happening on the property well if they will continue to collect scrap metals you know your abandoned cars they're also part of the abandoned car program for the government of the virgin islands they're going to continue to do those things in terms of receiving certain types of waste and they're able to do that with an unimproved property this is a real bare bones industrial facility um operation it's a lot of processing and the processing will continue to take place in preparing them for shipment off-island and the off-island facility is where the actual shredding occurs and that occurs in new york where it's another plant that actually shreds it down and and transform it or recycles it into steel which is another really the

- 1:49:05 bulk of the major um operations of the the company where it's broken down and down but for the virgin islands the first part of the processing takes place here in the virgin island let me ask you what's the zoning of that area well right now it really is in our one zone So it is, but it is on the other side of the landfill where there are no, of the Bovoni Road. I'm not sure of the name of that road, but it's on the southern side of the Bovoni Road and it's part of the Bovoni Landfill where these operations take place where there are no residences in the area. I believe the nearest other type of business would be the gas station. That's not too far from there. Okay. Deputy, is it Deputy or Assistant Commissioner Richards?
- 1:50:07 I'm sorry. Deputy Commissioner. How are you? Deputy Commissioner. Deputy Commissioner, sir. We're not hearing you on this side, sir. Deputy Commissioner, sir. senator senator oh now now we can hear you senators it's our deputy commissioner it's our deputy commissioner 5.019 for via at least agreement via i noticed that in your testimony you did not provide the square footage or acreage can you share that with us and there's if there's a reason why that wasn't provided um like the others in your testimony uh very good question senator um the the the facility is a bunker a concrete bunker that within the facility uh the bunker is owned by the government of the virgin islands and the tower is owned by the government of the virgin islands and they are allowed to one minute they're allowed to place their equipment their telecommunication equipment in one of the rooms or suites within the bunker and they're allowed to put their antennas on the tower that's owned by the government as well so there there is dimensions of the room but that's that's the only space specific space that is being rented so uh if you give me one second the room that they rent is 30 seconds is nine feet by eight feet senator okay thank you for providing information that gives us a more clarity of what is happening and lastly for ac trucking and trash removal you spoke about your testament about expanding and hiring new personnel can you share with us what are your plans of expansion and how many people do you currently have within your business how many you plan to hire
- 1:52:11 um kadeem for age trucking we currently have set five employees and throughout by the end of this year we plan on increasing that to about 12 and as far as expansion we're currently working with the vi waste management and assisting them in removing residential trash throughout the island and disposing of it at the landfill and like i mentioned our expansion aspect is to not only dispose of the trash but try to get to the point where a lot of it can be sorted and the cardboard and plastic instead of it going to the landfill it could be shipped off island Good, thank you for that, Madam Chair. Thank you for the time and I stand in support of these measures.
- 1:53:06 Thank you. Thank you, Senator Carrion. So Mr. Benjamin, based on your last comment, are you saying that you are actually working with Waste Management Authority to begin some level of recycling? As it stands now, we're actually working with a few companies off-island trying to find a company that suits our needs. And I'm actually gathering information so we could have a conversation with Waste Management. But seeing that as we are hands-on and we know that what the bulk of the waste is, we're just trying to figure the best ways to tackle the entirety of the project before we present it to them.
- 1:54:01 So you said cardboard and what else? Plastic. And plastic. Because as it stands at the moment, metal is taken care of. Right. So Mr. Richards, I wanna go back to a question that the previous speaker asked about the zoning. So basically, what's the zoning of the landfill area? Senator, part of the landfill is zoned industrial, part of it is zoned residential, some of it is part of it is zoned public. I was just here whispering offline. I believe the area has been rezoned. I believe there is an amendment, I believe, that was put in, I wanna remember, Senator Berry's name was attached to it, where the entire area was changed, but I don't have the document, I can't recall, but I couldn't, correct.
- 1:55:07 And I understand what you're saying, but I think that it's important that, as we make these decisions, we know exactly what we're making decisions on. If we have areas that are still zoned R1 in that area where we operating these types of businesses, it's important that the government make it right, because when businesses or individuals that own private property decide that they want to operate outside of the zone, they have to come before the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and do the right thing. So the government should be no exception, right?
- 1:55:52 Yes, Senator, but I also want to believe that, well, our zoning R1, R2 does allow for certain operations to go on as well at a residential zone property as well. Okay, so if you could just check that for us to make sure that we're making the right decisions because at the end of the day, there are homes on the other side of the street of where these businesses are being conducted and we always want to err on the right side of the lawn or on the right side of our citizenry. I think that's important for us to do. So whatever we need to do to write correct is important that we do that. So I want to thank Senator Carrion for bringing that question before us. Is Senator Johnson, Senator Johnson? Senator Johnson, you're recognized for your, oh, I believe there's a point of inquiry. Senator Fonseca, one second, Senator Johnson. Senator Fonseca, you're recognized for your point of inquiry.

- 1:57:01 Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Jones, I just wanted to follow up with you. The property south of the Bovoni Road, right? With A9 trucking. I want to know your policy. If someone dispose of an air conditioner or some old wire, what's your policy? And does people go down there and recycle that copper, et cetera, and pull out a compressor out of the refrigerator and stuff? What's your policy on those items? I believe for VI recycling, they are specific in terms of what items they choose. Really, we're looking for scrap metal, and that usually consists of old automobiles and old equipment, things like that. So in terms of an air condition, those would have to be, I believe, would abide under the regular rules of what goes into or what is not appropriate for the land.
- 1:58:07 No, I just want to know your policy. Can someone go down there and take out a compressor out of an old refrigerator and not be in trouble? What's your policy on that? I'm not sure. And again, I think that's outside of the purpose. Mr. Richards, Deputy Commissioner. can you answer to that uh senator i i don't have uh i don't have an answer for you for that question to be honest thank you madam chair thank you so let's tie to the operations of the landfill area uh senator johnson you recognize your seven minutes yep good afternoon thank you very much madam chair good afternoon to my colleagues good afternoon to the view and listening audience and good afternoon to the testifiers i i really want to applaud mr isaac and his partner for showing up it's important that business owners that are asking for his agreement to show up because it's not everything the attorneys can answer because the attorneys don't work on that site so i want to applaud you two young men and you know i i definitely when the time come i'm not a part of this committee but when it reaches to me i will definitely support you guys and i really appreciate you coming i would like to start off my question when i think it's mr benjamin you spoke about expansion you guys have any desire or looking into the tire recycling and trying to assist with getting some of these tires off the island um i have not looked into the tires in depth however um there are companies that does the same plastic as well that does rubber um and they recycle the tires and there's a way that they use them to make reuse them in recycling to make mats um and in some cases soles for shoes um but i'll make note that um that's something that i could look into it i think i think it's an adventure you should definitely look into we have a big problem here and waste management could could surely show
- 2:00:18 you those tires and it's a hazardous site when you see all of those tires and maybe if there's a way that you guys could uh adventure into that direction would probably help you and i really again i appreciate you guys come here uh mr vincent richards in this contract agreement with is trucking i i think we're talking about some improvement in the structure and the property and there's a there's a rate percent increase of tree but when that construction is complete do you have an analysis as to what that lease agreement would be like because i think they might have produced our plans and stuff to you guys already uh good question senator um the current property is the previous tenant uh had left the property in uh in a state uh they're not in business anymore Mr. Isaac and his partner asked to take over the property and they're going to be investing I would assume the bulk of their upfront investment in terms of cleaning the property and clearing it of old trucks old equipment and probably a lot of metal scrap metal scrap metal um on the property um there is an office that needs to be uh demoed and rehabilitated and there is a mechanic shop or shed that needs to be demoed and rebuilt as well so um at this point i mean with the cost of building going up every day i cannot imagine what it's going
- 2:02:09 cost them in the end of their term but that was one of the reasons why the lease is structured in the manner in which it was because it was either the gvi itself was going to pay to clean the property and refurbish the property or they were going to undertake it so that's why for 36 months they have a reduced rent structure that gives them the breathing room to do what they need to do to get the property back up to par i hope that answers your question senator you're trying to work with these young men that are trying to establish themselves and you know get a business going thank you very much for that information and suntech attorney kevin rains does your company receive any kind of economic um any benefits from economic development commission uh no it does not it uh pays all of its taxes on time never applied for any uh my understanding is that it has not and it does not intend to and i i definitely would like to see via here you're representing him but i don't think you could answer some of these questions because we're trying to do a lease agreement here with via but every day you hear folks complaining about the kind of um service they're receiving in fact on my way here today i heard some folks complaining that they're not even getting the hurricane channel now the weather channel and might have to be looking to pay additional service for that you're aware of any of that stuff uh you can be sure that i will pass the message on to the appropriate people that via my understanding is that they attempted to come on through um microsoft teams but what weren't able to do so um but um now that this matter that you've just suggested uh is in the record concerning the weather channel uh i will bring that up to them this afternoon and i'll make sure that they respond back to you please let them know we have a beautiful facility here and they're welcome to come and sit in well and you know share some more information because it's information that the public wants to know in fact it's information that their clients their customers would like to definitely know and it's scary when people know that we're getting ready to go into a hurricane season but yet now some folks are saying that they don't have the channel and they might have to pay additional funds so if we will be hitting what people are in the packet i think they're going to need to

- 2:04:32 gates be a share to you agree i i understand and i will pass the message on thank you very much and and for a9 you spoke about this scrapping material and stuff like that and again i like when business owners here and i understand you're talking about one minute there's some there's some private sectors in the area in your scrapping of metal are you doing any if you know attorney jones are you aware of they're doing um scrapping by cutting with torch and if they're cutting up the cars and that they are dismantling to ship it out um i again um mr kevin ruffler and just recently had open heart surgery so he wasn't cleared by his doctors to be here and again with the problems we had getting him online so he could answer some of those technical questions and i really can't answer that specific question i have an idea but i don't um i'm not certain so unless mr richard seems to have an answer for that please go ahead mr richards uh good question senator um from our observation at the property on a monthly basis the vehicles are processed where the oils and the coolants and other time are removed from the vehicles and they're crushed into cubes and then they're packed onto 40 foot or 45 foot long uh flatbeds and then they're shipped off island on a weekly basis okay thank you very much and miss jones uh send my uh prayers uh the owner and hope that he recuperate i'm a timely man and i'll go as well with the family thank you very much madam chair thank you uh senator johnson uh senator is uh i'm trying to see who's in the chambers in st croix
- 2:06:27 so i'm not seeing senator francis so let's go to senator joseph Senator Carla Joseph, you're recognized for your seven minutes. Thank you, Madam Chair, and a pleasant good day to you, our colleagues, as well as the viewing and listening audience, as well as the testifiers. I too want to just rise and commend the small business owners here who have taken an opportunity to do business with the Virgin Islands government through these leases. I understand, based on the post-audit report, that three of the leases are new leases and one is a renewal. Is that correct, Mr. Richards? Richard?
- 2:07:24 What was the question, repeat the question please, Senator? How many of these leases are for renewal? Three of them are existing tenants and one is a new tenant. Which one is the new tenant? The new tenant is Ace Trucking, Senator. And Ace Trucking is here with us today. Okay, so I wanted to just follow up on a question that I have and it's just my little peeve regarding the zonings the zonings these are all public land is correct the question for me or yes for you mr. Richards let me just be correct I'm so sorry kindly indicate whether all of these lands are public Senator um bear with me a bit I was here reading the document for act number 6729 that i just received that i'm trying to forward to the committee chair um that rezoned the properties from r1 to p public okay so all of these properties should be public all based on 6729 the subject properties uh were changed to public so all of these properties the one just for so we can be clear when you said subject the property that's going to be at least with uh anthony isaac doing business as ace trucking and trash removal that should move from industrial to to public correct no sender i think i misspoke over conflating the conflating the the facts which one for the property for ace trucking uh is zoned industrial as is that's in
- 2:09:16 the sub base industrial area okay um i was referring to a prior question in reference to vi recycling that a9 i'm so sorry the a9 trucking the company the company's vi the company's a9 trucking and sar sarnelli uh brothers doing business as as a joint venture doing business as vi recycling on that subject property in bovoni i have since learned or found a document that showed that it was rezoned from r1 to uh from residential to public okay very good i'm glad we were able to clarify that on the record because that was one of my major question i wanted to ask mr benjamin and or mr isaac can you uh indicate to us how long have you been in business here in the virgin islands um ace trucking has been in business since 2018 however my partner um has been doing business for a little north of 30 years um and on the island of saint thomas he used to work with um mr patrick charles or charlie's trucking um for several years and we decided to take the leap of faith and started our own venture and you should be applauded for that leap of faith and we are definitely here to support our small business especially when you have a vested interest in our community and your presence here demonstrates that I also wanted to ask is this property that is being considered mr. Benjamin's of I believe it was answered you're saying that it's sufficient to meet your needs currently correct currently yes okay are you considering looking at any other properties I've had discussions with the
- 2:11:27 government we've had a brief discussion but we're trying to take one bite at a time okay good now you have to crawl before you can walk okay very good now I I also wanted to ask if this is for, SunTech is here, okay this question is for SunTech, I believe this is in St. Croix, Mr. Reims you're representing SunTech correct?
- 2:12:01 That is correct. Okay, and we noted that the business has been operating from since 1968, and the current owners have been operating since 1990, who is having this lease agreement. Kindly indicate for us, Attorney Rames, whether this property, when you negotiated, what was the year an appraisal was done for this property one minute yeah unfortunately I don't have that information maybe mr. Richards can assist us thank you mr. Richards good morning senator good afternoon afternoon the subject property for st. Thomas gas or Sun tech doing business of st. Thomas gas The last time we conducted the appraisal for the subject property was in excess of two years.
- 2:13:04 Two years ago. 30 seconds. And the other properties, sir? We did not get appraisals for the other three properties. And why not? I guess you know we did internal market research ourselves within how is that process held how was that

process conducted what is your methodology and approach methodology and approach to doing these internal I'll give you an example I mean time when I'm chair I'm so sorry I'll give you an example I mean when via when via previously via was paying \$200 monthly or I guess \$2,400 annually for the space I got we got in contact with telecommunication companies in the private sector here in the market and basically found out what they they would charge or what they are charging the GVI BIT or other government agencies for using their space and their tower space and that's what we use as guidance that what that's that is what an appraiser would have done to get the same data so you know we did it ourselves internally okay I just have some concerns about that methodology methodology and approach I understand and maybe it's because you may have some financial challenges but you want to always get something that is certifiable when you're looking at appraisals madam chair I don't have any further questions okay all right thank you senator Joseph very quickly mr. Benjamin oh mr. Isaac so currently you're you're in business since 2018 correct yes so where are you currently conducting your business from

2:15:14 we're actually currently conducting out of um number 124 sub base we previously had a piece of property that we were renting from someone in altona and then we had an agreement with the previous owner and sub base okay so you have not moved on to this property that we're discussing to date I need clarification because I don't have the number on this so help me out here we were partially there we're partially there you're partially there yes okay Mr. Senator the the process for getting a long-term lease can take between three to nine months that's just the reality of it we the department has the authority to enter into one-year leases with with tenants so what we did was we entered into a one-year lease to give them access to the property so they could start cleaning and clearing the property and then we also started the process of a long-term lease as well so I believe they're in the midst of the cleaning and clearing of the property and and utilizing the property to some degree you know so that that's that's that's a reasonable response I understand that you You know, it does take an insurmountable amount of time to move leases through the system, the processes that you work on it. Then it goes to the lawyer within your organization, then it goes to the attorney general's office, then it goes to the office of the governor, so it's a minute, so it could create some

2:17:09 frustration and while these businesses are ready to start up, you allow them to move forward. So it almost comes across as if the legislative process is basically, I'm gonna use the term, but you know what I'm saying. If they're already there, then we have small businesses, how do we do the dance? So it really says to us that we really need to, because we cannot continue to create anxiety amongst our small businesses, our businesses overall, right? So that nine-month process, we need to figure out how to streamline that process. Bottom line, that's important because while they're waiting, they are hedging their bets with improvements, spending their money, et cetera. So what are the plans, Department of Property and Procurement, to, and it's not only you in your area, but just overall, because their documents touch a number of agencies, not only you, AG, Government House. On average, I'm going to ask you, on average, and then I'm going to ask you, what are the conversations around streamlining that process? So on average, how long does it take in the Attorney General's office? Because you watch the flow, so you should have a chronological order of the flow so how long does it take the AG's office to move it how long does it take the providing that there are no issues of course how long does it take the office of the governor etc is that question for me senator yeah because you are the person that touch all the documents and Then I'm gonna ask them how long it took them.

2:19:01 Well, Senator, you know, to be frank with you, getting a lease done, if we come to, if both sides have come, arrived at mutual terms, can be as little as 30 days to get it out of our shop. It could take longer if we're back and forth. Once it leaves the Department of Property and Procurement, it goes to the Department of Justice. If all our T's are crossed and all our I's are dotted, it's a few days at the Department of Justice. A few.

2:19:33 It can be- So, where's the bottleneck? You know, I believe the, you know, after it leaves the Department of Justice, it takes some time at the governor's office, and, because they have a lot of things that they got going on, and then it takes some time here at the legislature between, you know, the different committees that it has to go through and whatnot, but um okay so let me ask the impacted uh individuals the least and this is for um for ace so this leads us before us do you recall when you first engage with the government of the virgin islands to where we are today how long did it take you um after the year lease was issued um i think it took about six months in uh we had the discussion about a long-term lease and we started the process from there okay so six months but prior to the six months prior to the how do you getting to the one year lease to get you to the because obviously the property and procurement what they do to their credit is they try their best to help the businesses by giving you the one at least because they have the authority to do that so before that um it didn't take us much time i think um from the time we submitted application um to doing a meeting to find out exactly what we're looking for it took us less than 30 days great and and that's i wanted that to come out on the record that from the property and procurement end they're doing what they have to do is the process the bureaucracy that goes um you know

- 2:21:24 through the the channel so you you have a comment sir richard last year was an extraordinary year it was you know that that last year was extraordinary um and it was extraordinary what does that mean there was there was an election last year i mean there was there was a point last year at the end of the fall of last year where there was an election going on both legislative senate and and a gubernatorial election so you know that's that's a reality but looking forward uh we anticipate the process to be shorter okay so um you've given us a really great political answer but i will share with you that once the leases come uh i mean from this committee's perspective once the leases come and they're tight we're going to hear them and coming through the process from the as myself serving in a previous capacity we didn't really sit on documents either so we have a commitment here on from the legislative end to push the documents forward just we just need to figure out on the gvis and how do we ensure that the small businesses the businesses overall are really able to get their um their leases processed in a timely fashion and we don't really create any unnecessary anxiety for our small businesses our businesses overall because it does become a little frustrating you know based on the time that it takes you go ahead i just want to add that the added scrutiny that we had here today is good it you know when when i go back to the office we're going to add a couple a couple points or check points on our checklist to make sure we tighten things up so that when we come here i believe the last might the the last hearing i had here in this committee
- 2:23:16 in the previous legislature i believe was like two or three minute rounds it was a single round because everything was just moving you know that tight but clearly there's some more scrutiny here some more checkpoints that we need to check some boxes and we're gonna add them to our process on the front end to make sure when they get here there's no hiccups and there's no questions absolutely i appreciate the scrutiny okay and it's it's important that we understand that process improvement is necessary as we do the work so once you come here it'll make it easier so this this is gonna this one take took a little longer but as we move this process along it'll come a lot easier and the information will be before us and we can go back to the three minutes the two minutes uh point of inquiry from Senator Fonseca. I see Senator, the Vice Chair of this committee actually, Senator Francis Jr., he's ready. So, raise Senator Fonseca succinctly and then we'll go to our last speaker. Thank you kindly, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I wanted to follow up on the question from the distinguished senator from Bovoni regarding the appraisals. Regarding the appraisals, Mr. Vincent Richards, the appraisal, i wanna get it clear, you are doing the appraisals in-house or you're having it done by a certified professional?
- 2:24:52 Senator, appraisals are not required for leases. They're only required for when we want to sell or purchase property. Nonetheless, it's our practice to, at times, get appraisals to get guidance on value. So you do it or you hire someone to do it? We hire appraisals. we have we have probably about four five six appraisal companies that we that we that we contract to to do appraisals for properties and approximately how much a year it costs you to do appraisals i believe we're budgeted somewhere around 150 000 and that's not that's not anywhere near enough thank you madam thank you so basically the other challenge that we have is and it goes back to what we said earlier what i said earlier is we don't have an abundance of appraisers here in the territory so again we have to make sure that we are able to at we are prepared we have we utilize the opportunities to advance these leases um so these small businesses can you know open their doors and we can see the economic boosts in the territory so i appreciate what you you guys do at the Department of Property and Procurement to move these leases along. So you know, there's a lot of conversations around a lot of things that we don't necessarily have control over. And that's why it's so important for us to look at the present value and the CPI index so we could determine what, you know, what these leases potentially can generate for this territory. at the four leases that's in front of us, based on the present value, we've seen some 1.2 million. But if we look at the future value, if you will, we can generate a little more than 1.6 million dollars. So there's a lot of potential in this conversation today for the government of the Virgin Islands to generate revenues. Okay, so Senator Francis
- 2:27:04 Junior you're recognized for your seven minutes. Thank you very much Madam Chair and real quickly if I ask a question that was already asked and answered simply say that and i'll move on as i have to step out into a meeting real quickly again i'm happy for this opportunity because we're speaking that in fact that there's some economic development here by moving these leases on as well as revenues coming into the the government coffers which aid us in being able to provide services to this community. Deputy Commissioner Richards, is your testimony that in fact all of the entities that came before us are in compliance with the one million dollar public liability coverage? Yes, Senator. Anybody that's in possession or on the property has to, had to have provided us copies of their liability policies and show the gvi as um additionally insured and it's your testimony that in fact this is all completed and in your possession yes senator uh we we uh yes yes senator very well and in respect uh to them being in compliance with our taxes gross receipt excise taxes and everything or a payment plan that is also validated by property and procurement uh no senator um the the the the letters of good standing for their franchise taxes come from the office of lieutenant governor uh the department of licensing and consumer affairs are required to get clearance from the internal revenue uh bureau to uh verify uh gross receipts taxes and the like so uh you know One must assume that once they're giving a business license, they are up to date on their taxes and or have a payment plan in place. Well, I trust that we're not assuming and in fact we're validating that that had been

done.

2:29:11 Is that your testimony today? Yes, Senator. I am relying on the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs to validate that before issuing the business license, Senator. very well in regards to the lease revenues that come into the government coffers is there a separate account or this actually is deposited into a general fund I'm not a financial whiz but I believe that it's deposited into the business and commercial account okay but I'm sure you're aware of whether or not Pulse Audit is able to glean the funding that goes into for this revenue whether or not it goes into a special account or to the general fund? Mr. Chair you're asking Mr. President you're asking the chair a question you're putting me up on a stand yes the business and commercial account goes to the... I'm asking you to share whether or not Pulse Audit could speak to that. He's not here. He stepped away so but I can respond. Okay.

2:30:19 But he's not at the mic. So the business and commercial account sits within the Department of Property and Procurement and those resources are used to validate or are used for the purposes of the budget for the Department of Property and Procurement as we contemplate our budgets annually. Paul Salata is back if you, and of course you got to hold the speaker's time. I don't know if you wish to answer any more Mr. Paul Salata on that. Are you good? Okay, so does that satisfy your question, Mr. Chair? It does, Madam Chair. I just wanted to, it was just a prelude to my question to Deputy Richards, whether or not there is a mechanism or some form of automation to make sure that if there's any delayed payment, that in fact that we're able to account for that during our budget review, whether or not he's aware of that mechanism by which they're tracking payments.

2:31:24 Can you repeat the question, Senator, please? Am I asking whether or not there is some automation or a mechanism by which you're able to track to ensure that lease agreements are paid in a timely fashion, if there's any delayed payment, you know, that there is some accountability to ensure that those lease payments are being made to the government to the Virgin Islands. Internally at the Department of Property and Procurement, we do have software that is accessible to us and to myself through either a computer or handheld devices to check to verify that the status of the accounts and the payments. Senator?

2:32:06 Very well. And real quickly, Attorney Rames, in regards to the request from St. Thomas Gas and Suntec, there were some issues in the past in regards to the timely delivery of propane fuel to residents. Are you aware whether or not that has been addressed? You know, my understanding is that there have been supply issues in the past, but I think that those have been resolved. I think that they have an on-time delivery, at least an orientation in the company for on-time delivery uh i'm not aware that those uh problems are currently persisting can i ask that in fact if you could just take it back to to management and ensure um because i know that that was a topic of discussion in the past both on the st thomas and the st croix site uh where there is some supply chain issue and and delivery was was being compromised and let me uh just ask you're speaking with the effect of residential or commercial customers or both both okay i will ask the question and i will revert back to you uh via via email very well thank you thank you very much um that's that's my line of questions at this point um but i'm chair again i want to recognize the work of the ace trucking as well as a nine um mr benjamin and and mr isaac in their continued work and the expansion there and continue to wish them good luck as young individuals again um you know moving to keep our island beautiful and clean as well as to you know continue to expand that um a9 trucking the same goes there thank you very much madam uh chair for the time thank you thank you uh mr president um i i knew that i heard a motion we're heading straight to the motion senator um We have to change stenographers, so please allow the process. No? We're good?

2:34:05 Okay, we can push through. Got it. Okay, so you ready to bring the motion, Senator? Senator Javon E. James, Sr., you're recognized for your motion. Madam Chair and colleagues, I move that Bill 35-0017, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands acting through its commission of the Department of Property and Procurement and Sun Tech Group Inc. doing business at St. Thomas Gas for parcel number four submarine base number six, South Side Quarter, St. Thomas Virgin Islands consisting of approximately 27 732.393 united states square feet or 0.637 u.s acre as shown on pwd file number d9-1426-278 to be used for the purpose of operating a trucking transportation delivery and retail business of bottle propane gas and for no other purpose be forwarded from the committee of budget appropriations and finance to the committee and rules and judiciary for further consideration I still move a motion has been made by properly made by Senator Javon E. James senior seconded by senator doing MD graph senator Ree Fonseca rule call on bill Bill number 35-0017.

2:35:44 Senator Marvin A. Blyden. Senator Blyden, absent. Senator Samuel Carillon. Yes. Senator Samuel Carillon, yay. Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff. Yes. Senator DeGraff, yay. Senator Ray Fonseca. Yes. Senator Fonseca, yay. Senator Novel E. Francis, Jr. Yay.

- 2:36:17 Senator Francis, Jr., yay. Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory. Yes. Senator Fred Gregory, yay. Senator Javon E. James, Sr. Yes. Senator James, Sr., yay. Madam Chair, six a one absent thank you madam clerk bill number 35.0017 an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the virgin islands acting through its commissioner of the department of property and procurement and suntech group inc doing business as st thomas gas for parcel numbers four submarine base number six south side quarter st thomas virgin islands consisting of approximately 27,732.393 U.S. square feet or 0.637 U.S. acre as shown on PWD file number D9-1426-T78 to be used for the purpose of operating a trucking, transportation, delivery and retail business of bottled propane gas and for no other purpose has been approved by the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance and will be forwarded to the Committee on Rules and the Judiciary for further consideration.
- 2:37:42 Do I have a motion? Senator DeGraff, you're recognized for your motion. Thank you, Madam Chair. I move Bill No. 35-0018, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its commission of the Department of Property and Procurement and A9 Trucking Enterprises, Inc., and Sauneli Brothers, VI Inc., DBA, VI Recycling Company, be voted on favorably in this committee and forwarded to the Committee of Rules and Judiciary for further consideration. I so move.
- 2:38:17 Second. The motion has been properly moved by Senator Duane M. DeGraff, seconded by Senator Giovanni James Sr., Senator Reeve Fonseca, roll call, hearing no objections. Roll call on bill number 35.0018. Senator Marvin A. Blyden. Senator Blyden, absent. Senator Samuel Carrion.
- 2:38:48 Yes. Senator Carrion, yay. Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff. Yes. Senator DeGraff, yay. Senator Ray Fonseca. Yes. Senator Fonseca, yay. Senator Novel E. Francis Jr. Yeah. Senator Francis Jr., yay. Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory. Yes. Senator Fred Gregory, yay. Senator Jevon E. James Sr. Yes. Senator James Senior, yay. Madam Chair, six yay, one absent.
- 2:39:30 Thank you, Madam Clerk. Bill number 35-0018, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement, and A9 Trucking Enterprises, Inc., and Sinelli Brothers, VI, Inc., doing business as VI Recycling Company, has been approved by the Committee and budget appropriations and finance, and will be forwarded to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further consideration. Do I have a motion?
- 2:40:02 Senator James Sr., you're recognized for your motion. Madam Chair, I move that Bill Number 35-0019, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its commission of the Department of Property and Procurement and the Virgin Islands Telephone Corporation doing business as via for a portion of a telecommunication tower and bunker in Building No. 1, Street 2, Parcel No. 6, Recovery Hill, Company Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, consisting of a telecommunications tower and a 9x8 room and bunker, zoned P for the establishment and operation of a wireless link connections and to house associated equipment in the nine by eight bunker and for no other purposes whatsoever we be voted on favorably in the committee on budget operations and finance and be forwarded to the committee on rules and judiciary for further consideration I so move motion has been properly moved by Senator Javon James senior seconded by Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff roll call on bill number 35.0019. Senator Marvin A. Blyden. Senator Blyden absent. Senator Samuel Carrion. Senator Carrion yay. Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff. Senator DeGraff yay.
- 2:41:41 Senator Ray Fonseca. Yes. Senator Fonseca. Yay. Senator Novel E. Francis Junior. Yay. Senator Francis Junior. Yay. Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory. Yes. Senator Fred Gregory. Yay. Senator Javon E. James Senior. Yes. Senator James Senior. Yay. Madam Clark. I'm sorry. Madam Chair. 6 yay, 1 absent. Thank you Madam Clerk. Bill number 35-0019, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands acting through its commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and the Virgin Islands Telephone Corporation doing business as via for a portion of a telecommunication tower and bunker in building number 1 suite 2, parcel number six recovery hill company quarter st croix virgin islands consisting of a telecommunications tower and a nine by eight room and bunker zone p for the establishment and operation of a wireless link connection and to house associated equipment in the nine by eight bunker and for no other purpose whatsoever has been approved by the committee on budget appropriations and finance and will be forwarded to the committee on rules and judiciary for further consideration do i have a motion motion senator so we did st croix so we're gonna senator francis jr you recognize your motion
- 2:43:29 thank you very much madam chairman and chair and colleagues i move that bill number 35 that's 0025, an act approving the lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement and Anthony Isaac doing business as ACE, trucking and trash removal will be approved by the Committee of Budget, Appropriations and Finance and sent on to the Rules and Judiciary Committee for federal vetting. I so move. The motion has been properly made by Senator Novalee Francis Jr., seconded by Senator giovanni james senior senator duane m de graf senator ray fonseca roll call on bill number 35 that's zero zero two five senator morvenay blyden senator blyden

absent senator samuel carrion yes senator carrion yay senator duane m de graf yes senator de graf yay senator ray fonseca Yes.

2:44:31 Senator Fonseca, yay. Senator Novel E. Francis Jr. Yay. Senator Francis Jr., yay. Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory. Yes. Senator Fred Gregory, yay. Senator Javon E. James Sr. Yes. Senator James Sr., yay. Madam Chair, six yays, one absent. Thank you, Madam Clerk. Bill number 35.0025, an act approving the lease agreement between the government of the Virgin Islands, Department of Property and Procurement and Anthony Isaac doing business as Ace Trucking and Trash Removal has been approved by the Committee on Budget Appropriations and Finance and will be forwarded to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further consideration. Colleagues this concludes the business of today however I'm going to give the Deputy Commissioner of Property and Procurement Mr. Vincent Richards an opportunity I actually give everyone an opportunity to give a 30-second close Mr. Deputy Commissioner Richards you may proceed Madam Chair I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to present these these lease agreements for these businesses it's always a pleasure when the hard work of the Department of Property and Procurement and the executive branch comes together to provide opportunities to individuals I just like to say thank you I look forward to continue working with your committee and making the process much more streamlined and smoother so thank you very much thank you for your hard work attorney Jones yes good afternoon again on behalf of VI Recycling I too

2:46:29 want to express my gratitude on behalf of not only VI Recycling but the formative entities including a9 trucking and Sonelli Brothers Inc this is just going to allow the the company to continue to do important work in the Virgin Islands removing scrap metal and this is something that we don't even think about on an everyday basis and that's because the work is being done and they will continue to do that well into the next 10 years so having this lease is is true really a tremendous benefit to the company and we thank you for it thank you attorney Kevin Reims yes and thank you very much madam chair and to the Commission and to the to the committee I've had the privilege of representing both via and Sun tech for a couple of decades now and I know these people to be you know fully committed to the business and fully committed to providing excellent service to the people of the Virgin Islands we have some questions obviously that we need to answer and i will do so but i would like to thank the committee the government of the virgin islands and particularly um mr uh richards deputy commissioner richards uh you know for his diligence and his focus on getting these uh getting these leases uh completed thank you very much and thank you and i'll just say and to our stars of the day because they are just engaging with the the gva and i didn't ask you a question earlier i didn't ask you um is are you owed by waste management authority yeah how much i wanted to ask that question but my colleague made a motion so had to move on um i think it's

2:48:15 about nine months about five months nine nine months yeah so you see the issue so colleagues we know that as we look at the work that we do in the 35th legislature we definitely have to look at what's occurring with waste management authority these are small businesses the expectation is that they pay the government lease nine months what's your what's your monthly ask of waste management? I think it's um a little north of 60,000. So six time five is 35 right? Yeah 54. That's a lot of money, nine months.

2:49:09 So um we didn't want to close on a note but I think it was an important question to ask that you know as you come before the legislature you don't really ask these questions but you know you don't say that in your testimony but it's important that you know we know the challenges that small businesses are experiencing here so that's something that we have to make a commitment to address as we do the work in the 35th legislature so we're going to allow you to close 30 seconds all right thank you um the 35th legislature of the virgin islands for your time um and we look forward to doing business with you all right well we look forward to doing business with you we thank you for your work and um we have to push to make sure that our small businesses get paid when they do work with the government because our good friend here um the expectation is that you're gonna pay your lease on time you can't pay a lease on time if the government owes I'm just going to close by saying that we have started Women's History Month and Virgin Islands History Month, and I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank all Virgin Islands women who came before myself, my colleagues, and all women leaders in this territory whose shoulders we are standing on and give them all the thanks and the glory for helping us to progress as Virgin Islands women. And you know, I am often reminded that the work that we do in this institution is because of the opportunity for the work that we do is because of the people that came before us. So it's always good to give reverence to those that come before us and ensure that we

2:51:10 too have far reaching legislation and a far reaching impact, positive impact on the work that we do here. So it's my hope that I and my colleagues that we are leaving behind a foundation for others that come after us can build on. That's why we're here, to make sure that we reach back and we pull others forward. So without further ado, I want to thank the members of the central staff who've stayed here with us today and most definitely those of the media division. We know that we have some challenges that we really need to work out internally, but we're going to get it done. We know that,

you know, the bandwidth is definitely an issue that we have and we really need to work those things out. But without further ado, I want to thank each and every one of us that stayed here with us today. The Committee on Budget Appropriations and Finance is hereby adjourned.

2:52:16 Thank you. You

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke - only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

16x	Senator Ray Fonseca heard in this transcript as: Fonseca, Reeve Fonseca
13x	Senator Novelle Francis heard in this transcript as: Francis, Francis Jr, Francis Jr., Nova Lee Francis, Novalee Francis Jr, Novel E. Francis Jr
12x	Senator Dwayne DeGraff heard in this transcript as: DeGraff, Duane M. DeGraff, Dwayne M. DeGraff
12x	Senator Samuel Carrion heard in this transcript as: Carrion
7x	Senator Javan James heard in this transcript as: Javon E. James, Javon E. James Sr, Javon E. James Sr., Javon James, Jevon E. James Sr
7x	Senator Marvin Blyden heard in this transcript as: Blyden, Marvin A. Blyden
5x	Senator Franklin D. Johnson heard in this transcript as: Johnson
5x	Senator Fred Gregory the surname alone also matches: Donna A. Frett-Gregory; Donna Frett-Gregory
5x	Senator Marise C. James the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr heard in this transcript as: James Sr, James Sr.
4x	Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Fred Gregory
3x	Senator Carla Joseph the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph heard in this transcript as: Joseph
3x	Senator James Senior
3x	Commissioner Lisa M. Alejandro heard in this transcript as: Alejandro
3x	Senator Nova Lee Francis Junior heard in this transcript as: Novel E. Francis Junior
3x	Senator Samuel Carillon
2x	Senator Francis Junior
2x	Senator Giovanni James Sr the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Marise C. James; Neville James
2x	Senator Javon E. James Senior
1x	Senator Donna Frett-Gregory heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Frett-Gregory

Bills and acts referred to

Matched by number against our own acts corpus. The number is what the recognition heard, so it may be wrong; where it resolved, the title is the one the Legislature gave the act.

Bill 35-0025	Act 8713 · An Act approving the Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement and Anthony Isaac d/b/a Ace Trucking and Trash Removal
Bill 35-0017	Act 8707 · An Act approving the Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement, and Suntech Group, Inc. d/b/a St. Thomas Gas for Parcel No. 4 Submarine Base, No. 6 Southside Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 27, 732.393 U.S. sq. ft. or 0.637 U.S. acre, as shown on P.W.D. File No. D9-1426-T78, to be used for the purpose of operating a trucking, transportation, delivery, and retail business of bottled propane gas, and for no other purpose
Bill 35-0019	Act 8709 · An Act approving the lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement and the Virgin Islands Telephone Corporation, d/b/a/ VIYA, for a portion of a telecommunication tower and bunker in Building No. 1, Suite 2, Parcel No. 6 Recovery Hill, Company Quarter, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, consisting of a telecommunications tower and a 9· x 8· room and bunker, zoned P, for the establishment and operation of wireless link connections and to house associated equipment in the 9· x 8· bunker, and for no other purposes whatsoever ---0
Act 6729	Act 6729 · (title not held)
Act 8713	Act 8713 · An Act approving the Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands Department of Property and Procurement and Anthony Isaac d/b/a Ace Trucking and Trash Removal
Act 8707	Act 8707 · An Act approving the Lease Agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through its Commissioner of the Department of Property and Procurement, and Suntech Group, Inc. d/b/a St. Thomas Gas for Parcel No. 4 Submarine Base, No. 6 Southside Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, consisting of approximately 27, 732.393 U.S. sq. ft. or 0.637 U.S. acre, as shown on P.W.D. File No. D9-1426-T78, to be used for the purpose of operating a trucking, transportation, delivery, and retail business of bottled propane gas, and for no other purpose
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Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 35-0018