



| Legislative Session

Legislature USVI

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0:00:00 that we've had before we adopt rules so I am a hundred percent in support of the new rules of the 35th legislature which virtually mirrors or significantly mirrors what was there in the 34th with some strategic changes so at the appropriate time I plan to vote in the affirmative for both measures thank you very much mr. chair the president thank you thank you very much senator Potter senator Maurice see James you're recognized for your two minutes at this time please recognize the mic of a senator James thank you thank you mr.

0:00:46 president I too and good morning to the people of the Virgin Islands and my colleagues I too rise in support of both measures I echo the sentiments of my colleagues that rules are necessary for the operation of a organization and so bill number thirty five zero zero zero three will get my support with regards to bill number thirty five that zero zero two well flip it in the reverse with respect to bill number thirty five that zero zero zero three I commend the the sponsor of the bill from the first of all passing legislation to create the agricultural plan task force agricultural plan it was important for the task force to come up with a plan they did I viewed the hearing I also read the plan the plan that they proposed the plan that they proposed the plan that they proposed that they proposed to bill number thirty five that's zero zero zero three I commend the the sponsor of the bill from the first of all passing legislation to create the agricultural plan task force the agricultural plan it was important for the task force to come up with a plan they did I viewed the hearing I also read the plan that they proposed and clearly there are too many plans sitting on the shelves of the Virgin Islands so it was very important that for this to be implemented that it be funded and for us to send a clear signal to the the farmers of the Virgin Islands that we in fact support them and we understand their importance to us and that in fact by passing this they will be able to implement the mandates created under the plan thank you and I will support both at the appropriate time thank you very much Senator James Senator Fonseca you're recognized for your two minutes yes blessings and pleasant good morning to everyone I I see it's now about eleven fifty seven so it's still morning um I to rise in support of the bill thirty five dash zero zero zero three for the agricultural plan in particular I want to point out how important this is in that it affects about four hundred and twenty five employees at the university of the university of the university of the university

of the university, who in fact didn't get that three percent raise so this is a very good measure. I also I'm in full support that it's going to hire the local farm coordinator and also the technical center where it's going to be able to provide the skills grant writing and all of these issues that the farmers need as you said. As you know farming is very important in our community we've been saying it over and over again that we have to be able to feed ourselves so I am in full support of this bill and I want to commend the thirty-fourth legislature which was chaired by Donna Fred Gregory for doing so I am in full support of this bill and I want to commend the thirty-fourth legislature, uh which was chaired by Donna Fred Gregory for doing all the leg work on this matter.

0:03:40 uh thank you very much for your time. Thank you very much Senator Fonseca. Senator Capehart you recognize for your two minutes. Good morning or good day to my colleagues. Good day to the people of the Virgin Islands. I stand today in support of bill number 35-0002 the rules of the 35th legislature. I also support bill number 35-003 that I have just signed on as a co-sponsor because I believe this bill sends the message that this body is serious about food security in this territory. This bill seeks finances of finance agriculture sustainability. From this measure our territory has the ability ability to establish an investable food system. I believe in sustaining ourselves because if we continue to import we don't know when that day will come. that these trailers may not be able to come in today tomorrow for weeks. So I think this measure is very important for the future of the generations to come with the farmers. This is an exciting day so thank you Mr. President. Thank you very much Senator Capehart. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins majority leader you recognize for your two minutes.

0:05:24 Thank you Mr. Chair and good morning 11:59 a.m. Good morning to all. You know bill number 35- I rise in support of both bills as well bill number 35-0002. What's before us are the rules of the 35th legislature and have been discussed thoroughly. It is often said that the majority rule so when the vote comes I expect that the wishes of the majority will be in place. With regards to bill number 35-0003 the Virgin Islands Agricultural Plan. I had an opportunity last term to vet that bill as it came to the committee on economic development and agriculture. You know and as I look at this I'm saying that we gotta focus on crop and livestock production here in the territory in order to ensure food security. So that we can also address the food prices that we're seeing and not shift it to cannabis. This plan should again focus on food as we can see when we walk into the supermarkets the price on eggs, the price on lettuce and whatnot. Just as an example these are two things that we can grow here. So again I'm looking forward to supporting this Virgin Islands Agricultural Plan finally and again focusing on crop and livestock production here for food security. Thank you so much. Thank you very much.

0:07:05 Thank you very much. Senator Gittins. Madam Secretary. Carla Joseph you're recognized for your two minutes. Thank you so kindly Mr. President. A pleasant good day to everyone. I too rise in support of bill number 35-0002 which is a resolution adopting the rules of the 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands as well as bill number 35-0003 which provides funding to implement a much needed plan. The agriculture plan it puts some money you have to usually put your money where your mouth is. So that is what we really is key with this agriculture plan. I want to say something really critical about the agriculture plan that is needed. Especially in the St. Thomas St. John district because my staff and I had a really great opportunity to visit the agriculture site in Bordeaux here in St. Thomas. They need two critical things and I'm hoping with that with this agriculture plan it will be implemented with a level of fidelity and that is water as well as access to the sites the land to actually cultivate to have livestock grazing. It is very difficult to travel. It is very difficult to traverse that area. It is very difficult to traverse that area. The roads are despicable and deplorable. That is one other thing. But I want to also and I'm not the chairman of this committee but the chairman is here.

0:08:52 At the Charlotte Amali High School there is no longer an instructor for agriculture. And that is very disheartening especially when we are making ways to have an agriculture curriculum in place at the University of the Virgin Islands. How are we feeding into that? So those are some of the things that we are going to be here discussing in this body to address those with the Department of Agriculture as well as the Department of Education. We must have that succession and our young people need to be trained and prepared to take over as soon as possible. Not later. Soon as possible. Given, I'll just wrap up Mr. President, given that there is now a school of agriculture at the University of the Virgin Islands. So we will be on top of it I am sure. Thank you kindly Mr. President for the leeway. Thank you very much. Madam Secretary. Next we will come to the Vice President. Senator Blyton, you recognize for your two minutes.

0:09:53 Thank you so much Mr. President. Good afternoon to my colleagues, viewing and listening audiences, staff, central staff. Good morning to all. Good afternoon to all. I do write in support of both of these bills. Bill number 35.0002, which is the resolution adapting the rules of the 35th legislature. And bill number 35.0003, which is the agricultural plan. And as is often said, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. And that's a true statement.

0:10:30 I want to honestly thank the main sponsor of this most important bill, Senator, the former president of this institution, along with all other senators that signed on. Because I must say, food security is critical here in a small island here in the territory. And I want to say kudos. I'm big up too. We grew food, Inc. The Department of Tourism. All of the farmers, the

vendors who put on the St. Thomas, St. John Act Fair this weekend. It was well attended, I must say. Every year it's getting bigger and better. They're having more options, et cetera. And it's important with this plan in terms of the funding and resources that are going to be available as a result of the plan. Three seconds. And I think that it is critical that we support our farmers. That's why I know my team and I, last term, we actually donated a big tank, water tank, for the farmers in border. Because I do understand water is critical. And as my colleague stated, the roads also is deplorable, definitely. And we're going to do what we have to do in order of assisting our farmers. Again, I stand in support of both of these measures. Thank you so much, Mr. President, for the time.

0:11:51 Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. Madam Clerk, if you'll put two minutes on the clock for me, I'll appreciate it. I certainly rise in support of both of these measures before us. I want to recognize Bill number 35.0003. And first of all, to really commend the farmers. Those individuals that brave the sun every single day and go out and toil the soil and plant and make sure that we have some food here locally. I also want to say that I want to commend the Bill sponsors for moving this particular piece of legislation forward. It's a quality of life measure. It makes good, sensible legislation to address this as we talk about, you know, quality of food, food security, food sustainability. You know, I think it's important that we continue to push the issue. I'll tell you that over the last recent set of legislative body, we have really stepped up to the plate and address and supported our agriculture programs. And I'm hoping that the public are really aware of that. We have one of the largest events in the Virgin Islands or in the Caribbean coming up next month in our Ag Fair. And we are looking forward to showcase again our agriculture and our farmers and all the arts and crafts that occurs during that Ag Fair timing. It makes good sense again, because we're importing all of these foods, 95, 98% of our food are imported, which means that they're laid in by pesticide and herbicide and all kinds of things to really make them usable. You know, we don't know what we eat and these things have to be treated in order to survive two and three weeks.

0:13:33 You see them, the spoiler day after they arrive in your refrigerator, our onions, our peppers, they start to darken it. It's crazy. We don't know what we're eating, you know, so it makes good sense again for us to do that. But what's amazing to me is that we have all of this land space available to us and none of us are engaged in a high quality of poultry and egg farming. A dozen of eggs today is \$16. Unheard of. So we got our work cut out for us here. I truly believe that we're in a step in the right direction. And again, I also want to commend Dr. Hall. Time. I mean, he really jumped on this legislation and really led from the front and moving this legislation forward. So I want to commend him and certainly the team, the task force that was put together to address this. My time I've been called and, of course, I want to be respectful of the time.

0:14:30 Hearing no alibis. Let's take a roll call. What are you going to amend, Senator? Let's wait. We'll take a two-minute recess. Committee session stands in recess for two minutes. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

0:20:20 And she, too, I was notified, has passed away. And she just recently notified. So, again, the legislative body, as well as, you know, a lot of people have really suffered some illnesses. So, point of personal privilege, can you, is this something that's germane to the discussion that I would say, I would say, I would say, I would say, "I would, I would like to ask, I would like to ask for the body to give a one-minute moment of silence, or 30 seconds for the fallen, for the fallen, for those who have just passed. So, that's most appropriate, that's most appropriate, again, thank you, again, thank you, again, thank you, again, thank you very much for that moment of silence, and again, paying homage to those individuals that have fallen. Again, thank you very much for that moment of silence, and again, paying homage to those individuals that have fallen, and passed on, you know, we, we've been hit hard, you know, and we certainly want to remember those families in our prayers at this time. Thank you, Madam Clerk, can you please call up the first measure for a vote?

0:21:41 Bill number 35.0002, a resolution adopting the rules of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands. Senator Frances Heiliger, you recognize one amendment. Thank you. Has it been circulated? Hmm? It's a technical amendment. Very well. Thank you. You recognize. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I rise to offer, I rise to offer technical amendment to bill number 35.002 to appendix A of this bill, that on page 14, rule 205A, section A, that you strike the words after the word of, and strike the words not less than, ISO MOVE. Thank you.

0:22:30 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Motion, properly moved by Senator Francis Heiliger, seconded by Senator DeGraff and Senator Frankie Johnson, objected to by Senator Kenneth Gittins. Roll call. Senator Marvini Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Blyton. Senator Angel L. Bocas, Jr. Senator Bocas, Jr. Senator Bocas, Jr. Senator Bocas, Jr. Senator Dianne T. Capehart.

- 0:23:02 Senator Capehart. Senator Capehart. Senator Capehart. Senator Capehart. Senator Samuel Carrion. Senator Carrion. Senator Carrion. Senator Caryon. Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff. Senator DeGraff. Senator DeGraff. Senator DeGraff. Senator Ray Fonseca. No. Senator Fonseca. Nay. Senator Novelli. Francis, Jr. Nay. Senator Francis, Jr. Nay. Senator Alma Francis Heileger. Senator Francis Heileger. Senator Francis Heileger. Senator Francis Heileger. Senator Francis Heileger. Senator Donna E. Fred Gregory.
- 0:23:42 - No. - Senator Fred Gregory, not voting. Senator Kenneth L. Gittins? - No. - Senator Gittins, nay. Senator Maurice C. James? - No. - Senator James, nay. Senator Javon E. James Sr.? - Not voting. - Senator James Sr., nay. - Not voting. - Senator James Sr., not voting. Senator Franklin D. Johnson?
- 0:24:10 - Nay. - Senator Johnson? - Nay. - Senator Carla Joseph? - Nay. - Senator Joseph, nay. Senator Milton Potter? - No. - Senator Potter, nay. Mr. President? - Please record Senator Joseph's vote as no. - Senator Joseph, nay. - Please record Senator Fred Gregory's vote as yes. - Senator Fred Gregory, yay. - Yes. - Yes.
- 0:24:41 - Yes. - Senator Fred Gregory, yay. - Okay. - Mr. President, four yeas, nine nays, one absent, one not voting. - Very well. The measure fails. We're in our vote, we're in our vote, Senator, right now. So, again, we'll call up the measure and we'll take a vote on the measure at this time. - Bill number 35-0002, a resolution adopting the rules of the 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands.
- 0:25:19 - Roll call on bill number 35-0002. - Yes. - Senator Marvin A. Blyden? - Yes. - Senator Blyden, yay. - Yes. - Senator Angel L. Boquez, jr. - Yes. - Senator Boquez, jr., yay. - Senator Diane T. Capehart? - Yes. - Senator Capehart, yay. - Yes. - Senator Samuel Carrion? - Yes. - Senator Carrion, absent. - Senator Dwayne M. de Graff? - No. - Senator De Graff? - No. - Nay. - Senator De Graff, yay. - Senator Ray Fonseca?
- 0:25:45 - Yes. - Senator Fonseca, yay. - Senator Novelli Francis, jr. - Yes. - Senator Francis, jr., yay. - Senator Alma Francis Heiliger? - No. - Senator Francis Heiliger, yay. - Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory? - Yes. - Yes. - Senator Fred Gregory, yay. - Senator Kenneth L. Gittins? - Yes. - Senator Gittins, yay. - Senator Maurice C. James? - Yes. - Senator James, yay. - Senator Javon E. James, Sr. - Yes. - Senator James, Sr., yay. - Senator Franklin D. Johnson? - No. - Senator Johnson, nay. - Senator Carla J. Joseph? - Yes. - Senator Joseph, yay. - Yes. - Senator Milton Potter? - Yes. - Senator Potter, yay. - Yes. - Mr. President, 11 yeas, three nays, one absent. - Very well, thank you. The measure carries.
- 0:26:35 Bill number 35-0002, a resolution adopting the rules of the 35th Legislature of the Versace has been passed and will be sent to the Governor for further action. - - Point of personal privilege, Senator Frances Helga, you recognize. - Thank you very much. Good morning to my colleagues and the people of the territory. I want to take this time so the public could fully understand what this my majority just did. When we were here on the 9th of January, our minority leader got up and adopted the rules of the legislature. within that adoption of those rules, and it was voted on by this body. For the last two weeks we had rules in this institution. One of those rules allowed for the forming of the minority caucus. We followed those rules to a T. We followed those rules to a T, and we submitted them to who we needed to submit them to, which was the President's Office. Forming the minority. When you guys attempted or just changed the rules again, you basically erased the minority caucus, which was already in existence. So I'm a little bit concerned that in the spirit of cooperation that we have extended several hourly branches to this institution and its members, that y'all saw fit as an 11 member body to not allow the four of us to caucus like we did last term as four individuals. So I want the public to know that this is how this institution will be starting off in a very divisive and combative manner. So thank you very much for your time. Thank you very much, Senator Frances Heiliger.
- 0:28:24 For your point at this time, Madam Clerk, can you please call up the next measure before us? Bill number 35-0003, an act appropriating funds for the adoption of various portions of the Virgin Islands Agricultural Plan, submitted by the Agricultural Plan Task Force on December 29, 2021, as the official agricultural plan for the territory. Roll call on bill number 35-0003. Sen. Marvin E. Blyden. Sen. Blyden. Yes. Sen. Angel L. Boquez Jr. Yes. Sen. Boquez Jr. Yes. Sen. Dianti Capehart. Yes. Sen. Capehart. Yes.
- 0:29:01 Sen. Samuel Carrion. Sen. Carrion. Absent. Sen. Dwayne M. DeGraff. Yes. Sen. DeGraff. Yes. Sen. Ray Fonseca. Yes. Sen. Fonseca. Yes. Sen. Novell E. Francis Jr. Yes. Senator Francis Jr. Yay. Senator Alma Francis Heilegger. Senator Francis Heilegger. Yay. Senator Donna A. Fred Gregory. Senator Fred Gregory. Yay. Senator Kenneth L. Gittens. Senator Gittens. Yay. Senator Maurice C. James. Senator James. Yay. Senator Javon E. James Sr.
- 0:29:36 Senator James Sr. Yay. Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Senator Johnson. Yay. Senator Johnson. Yay. Senator Carla J. Joseph. Senator Joseph. Yay. Senator Milton Potter. Senator Potter. Yay. Mr. President. 11, sorry, 14 yeas, one absent. Thank you very much. The measure carries bill number 35.0003 and act appropriating funds for the adoption of various portions of Virgin Islands agriculture plan submitted by the agriculture plan task force on December 29, 2021 as the official agriculture plan for the territory have been approved by the 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands that will be sent

to the governor for further action. At this time colleagues, we'll be in recess until 6:30 this evening where we'll be entertaining the state of the territory address by the honorable governor, Albert Bryant Jr. Session stands at recess until 6:30 this evening.

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.

13x	Senator Marvin Blyden heard in this transcript as: Blyden, Blyton, Marvin A. Blyden, Marvini Blyton
12x	Senator Marise C. James the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr heard in this transcript as: James, James Sr, James Sr., Maurice C. James
11x	Senator Alma Francis-Heyliger heard in this transcript as: Alma Francis Heileger, Alma Francis Heiliger, Frances Heiliger, Francis Heileger, Francis Heiliger
10x	Senator Diane T. Capeheart heard in this transcript as: Capehart, Diane T. Capehart, Dianne T. Capehart
10x	Senator Kenneth L. Gittens heard in this transcript as: Gittens, Gittins, Kenneth Gittins, Kenneth L. Gittins
9x	Senator Carla Joseph the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph heard in this transcript as: Carla J. Joseph, Joseph, Joseph's
9x	Senator Dwayne DeGraff heard in this transcript as: De Graff, DeGraff, Dwayne M. DeGraff, Dwayne M. de Graff
9x	Senator Franklin D. Johnson heard in this transcript as: Frankie Johnson, Johnson
7x	Senator Milton E. Potter heard in this transcript as: Milton Potter, Potter
7x	Senator Ray Fonseca heard in this transcript as: Fonseca
6x	Senator Fred Gregory the surname alone also matches: Donna A. Frett-Gregory; Donna Frett-Gregory
6x	Senator Samuel Carrion heard in this transcript as: Carrion
5x	Senator Angel L. Bocas Jr heard in this transcript as: Angel L. Bocas Jr., Bocas Jr.
5x	Senator Novelle Francis heard in this transcript as: Francis, Francis Jr, Francis Jr., Novelli Francis
4x	Senator Javan James heard in this transcript as: Javon E. James Sr, Javon E. James Sr.
3x	Senator Angel L. Bolques, Jr. heard in this transcript as: Angel L. Bolques Jr., Angel L. Boquez, Boquez
3x	Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Fred Gregory, Donna E. Fred Gregory
2x	Senator Alma Francis Heidegger heard in this transcript as: Alma Francis Heilegger
2x	Senator Francis Heidegger heard in this transcript as: Francis Heilegger
2x	Senator Samuel Caryong heard in this transcript as: Caryon

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 35-0003** Act 8784 · November 14, 2023 · An Act appropriating \$350,000 from the General Fund of the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands to provide bottled drinking water to persons residing in the areas identified by the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority as most impacted by elevated levels of copper and lead in the potable water system; amending Act No. 8750 to change the appropriation recipient from the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services to the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services Emergency Fund; amending Act No. 8759 to include omitted appropriations and to make corrections to certain budget items for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024; amending Act No. 8765 to change the F
- Act 8784** Act 8784 · November 14, 2023 · An Act appropriating \$350,000 from the General Fund of the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands to provide bottled drinking water to persons residing in the areas identified by the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority as most impacted by elevated levels of copper and lead in the potable water system; amending Act No. 8750 to change the appropriation recipient from the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services to the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services Emergency Fund; amending Act No. 8759 to include omitted appropriations and to make corrections to certain budget items for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024; amending Act No. 8765 to change the F
- Act 8750** Act 8750 · An Act providing a lump sum appropriation from the General Fund of the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands to the Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services for the fiscal year October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024 a=0
- Act 8759** Act 8759 · An Act providing an appropriation from the General Fund of the Treasury of the Government of the Virgin Islands for the operation of the Government of the Virgin Islands during the fiscal year October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024 ---0
- Act 8765** Act 8765 · An Act providing an appropriation for the salaries and expenses of the University of the Virgin Islands for the fiscal year October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024 ---0

Referred to but not found in our acts corpus: Bill 35-0002