

12/17/2015-SPECIAL ORDERED

BILL NO. 31-0295

Thirty-first Legislature of the Virgin Islands

December 17, 2015

An Act providing for temporary housing for the Governor of the Virgin Islands and for other purposes

PROPOSED BY: Senators Clifford F. Graham, Myron D. Jackson and Kurt A. Violet
Co Sponsors: Janette Millin Young, Sammuell Sanes, Neville James,
Justin Harrigan, Sr., Almando "Rocky" Liburd, Jean A. Forde,
Marvin Blyden and Novelle Francis, Jr.

1 **WHEREAS**, the Organic Act of 1954, as revised, states that the Governor shall maintain
2 his official residence in Government House on St. Thomas; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the third floor of Government House has historically been used as the official
4 residence of the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands; and

5 **WHEREAS**, in 1995, the 5th elected Governor of the Virgin Islands, Governor Roy L.
6 Schneider converted the third floor of Government House into additional office space for the
7 Office of the Governor and for the most part the third floor has been used as office space since that
8 period in time; and

9 **WHEREAS**, the Government of the Virgin Islands acquired "Denmark Hill" Remainder
10 of Estate Catherineberg No. 8 Great Northside Quarter, St. Thomas, USVI, consisting of 6.23
11 acres, more or less, as shown on PWD Map No. D9-3470-T86 (herein referred to as

1 “Catherineberg”) as part of the transaction that purchased the West Indian Company Limited from
2 Denmark and placed this property under the ownership of the West Indian Company; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the West Indian Company-owned Catherineberg property contains structures
4 that were used as the residence of the former Directors of the West Indian Company prior to the
5 acquisition of the property by the Government of the Virgin Islands in 1993; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the West Indian Company has leased this property to the Government of the
7 Virgin Islands for a nominal fee of \$1.00 per year since the acquisition for the purpose of housing
8 the Governor of the Virgin Islands; and

9 **WHEREAS**, the West Indian Company is exempt from the payment of property taxes but
10 in lieu thereof is assessed a Payment In Lieu of Property Taxes (PILOT) in the amount of \$700,000
11 annually; and

12 **WHEREAS**, the West Indian Company is several years behind in the payment of the
13 PILOT and owes the Government of the Virgin Islands \$5.9 million as of September 30, 2015;
14 and

15 **WHEREAS**, the 7th elected Governor, John P. Dejongh, resided at his personal residence
16 during the entire time of his tenure as Governor leaving Catherineberg unoccupied as a living
17 quarters and as a result of this lack of use some build-up of mold in the residence rendering it
18 uninhabitable and unusable at the moment; and

19 **WHEREAS**, On January 5, 2015, Governor Kenneth Mapp was sworn in as the 8th elected
20 Governor of the Virgin Islands; and

21 **WHEREAS**, the 8th elected Governor of the Virgin Islands has had to reside in a rented
22 property or hotel rooms while staying in the Capital, which is inconsistent with the mandate under
23 the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands; Now, Therefore,

1 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:*

2 **SECTION 1.** (a) To resolve the ongoing effort to find suitable housing for the Governor
3 of the Virgin Islands, the Government of the Virgin Islands, acting through the West Indian
4 Company shall negotiate with the owner of Parcels No. 21, 22, 23 and 24 Dronningen's Gade, St.
5 Thomas, Virgin Islands to acquire such property for no more than the average appraised value of
6 three recent independent appraisals.

7 (b) In the interim while negotiations and closing documents are being prepared, the
8 Government of the Virgin Islands acting through the West Indian Company may lease Parcels No.
9 21, 22, 23 and 24 Dronningen's Gade, St. Thomas, VI for no more than \$8,000.00 per month
10 providing that such lease payments shall be credited towards the acquisition of such property.

11 (c) The Government of the Virgin Islands working with the West Indian Company
12 shall conduct a security review of Parcels No. 21, 22, 23 and 24 Dronningen's Gade, St. Thomas,
13 VI, and develop a scope of work to enhance the security requirement of such parcels.

14 (d) The West Indian Company shall pay the cost of acquisition of Parcels No. 21, 22,
15 23 and 24 Dronningen's Gade, St. Thomas, VI and the security enhancement and deduct any
16 amount spent from the Payment in Lieu of Property Taxes owed to the Government of the Virgin
17 Islands.

18 **SECTION 2.** The Government of the Virgin Islands shall prepare the necessary
19 documents to combine and incorporate Parcels No. 21, 22, 23 and 24 Dronningen's Gade, St.
20 Thomas, VI into Parcel No. 21 & 22 Kongen's Gade.

21 **SECTION 3.** All cost of maintenance and upkeep of Parcels No. 21, 22, 23 and 24
22 Dronningen's Gade, St. Thomas, VI must be borne by the Government of the Virgin Islands.

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BILL SUMMARY

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This bill provides for temporary housing for the Governor until property is purchased and added on to the property on which the Government House is located.

BR15-1153/December 15, 2015/AA