GOVERNMENT HOUSE
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Press Contact
Richard Motta
340-474-2399
www.vi.gov
richard.mottajr@go.vi.gov

Governor Bryan Approves Bills from August Legislative Session

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Jr. has approved four bills, including his legislation appropriating funds to repay retroactive wages to government employees, that were sent up from the 34th Legislature following their legislative session on August 30, 2022.

In his transmittal letter to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory, the Governor said he was very pleased to sign Bill No. 34-0299 (now Act 8613), which ratifies Hotel Development Act (HAD) financing for the owners of the Frenchman's Reef Marriott resort.

"This ratification not only approves the HDA financing for this long-awaited reconstruction project but also represents the first use of the HDA statute, which was originally enacted in 2011," Governor Bryan wrote. "As one of the first projects of my Administration in 2019, we established a collaborative working group of private sector hotel owners and developers, attorneys and financial advisers, as well as government advisers and counsel, along with input from members of the Thirty-Third Legislature to revise the statute to a workable program that could be applied so as to bring back our hotel industry after the devasting hurricanes of 2017.

"It is hoped that, now that the egg has been broken, other hotel developments utilizing this unique method of construction or reconstruction financing will follow," the Governor wrote.

He also "heartily" approved Bill No. 34-0301 (now Act 8614), which clarified the definition of "agricultural processing plant" in Act 8569 to once again specifically exclude rum distilleries from that definition.

"I am pleased that the Legislature saw fit to oppose and correct yet another clear instance of special interest legislation prohibited by the Revised Organic Act," Governor Bryan wrote.

The Governor also approved Bill No. 34-0244 (now Act 8611) and Bill No. 34-0289 (now Act 8612).

Bill No. 34-0244 amends Title 27 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 4, Section 191 to expand and clarify the definition of naturopathic medicine and the physical modalities used in the practice of naturopathy.

Bill No. 34-0289 appropriates funds to pay outstanding liabilities of the Government of the Virgin Islands from the General Fund in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, including the outstanding payment for fuel purchases and the payment of retroactive wages to Government employees and retirees.

The same measure also:

- Amends Act No. 8486 relating to supplemental appropriations for operating expenses of the Virgin Islands Hospitals and Health Facilities Corporation.
- Amends Acts No. 8356 and No. 8494 relating to appropriations from the Tourism Advertising Revolving Fund to the Department of Education for interscholastic competition to extend the funding to travel expenses, sports equipment, uniforms, sports-related software, and other sports-related purposes.
- Appropriates $100,000 to the Division of Personnel for the operation of the Virgin Islands Public Officials Compensation Commission.

In his transmittal letter, Governor Bryan also acknowledged passage of Resolution No. 1892 (Bill No. 34-0300) and thanked the Legislature for confirmation of the following nominations:
Gerson Martinez to the V.I. Aquaculture and Mariculture Commission
Dale Browne to the Virgin Islands Conservation District
Carl Tesitor Jr. to the Virgin Islands Conservation District
Dr. Learie Lindsay to the V.I. Board of Medical Examiners
Dr. William Delone to the UVI Research and Technology Park Board of Directors

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