

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1152

To amend the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 20, 1997

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN (for herself, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, and Mr. UNDERWOOD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To amend the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO THE REVISED ORGANIC ACT**
4 **OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.**

5 (a) TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF OFFICIALS CLARI-
6 FIED.—Section 14 of the Revised Organic Act of the Vir-
7 gin Islands (48 U.S.C. 1595) is amended by adding at
8 the end the following new subsection:

9 “(g) The laws of the Virgin Islands may define
10 whether an absence from the Virgin Islands of the Gov-

1 ernor or the Lieutenant Governor, while on official busi-
2 ness, is a ‘temporary absence’ for purposes of this sec-
3 tion.”.

4 (b) SHORT TERM BORROWING AUTHORIZATION.—
5 Section 8(b) of the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Is-
6 lands (48 U.S.C. 1574(b)) is amended by adding at the
7 end the following:

8 “(iv) The legislature of the government of the Virgin
9 Islands may issue notes in anticipation of the collection
10 of taxes and revenues for the current year, but the prin-
11 cipal amount of such notes may not exceed the anticipated
12 taxes and revenues for such year. Such notes shall mature
13 and be redeemed not later than 1 year from the date of
14 issue. No extension of such notes shall be valid and no
15 additional notes shall be issued under this authority until
16 the outstanding principal and interest on all notes issued
17 under this authority during preceding years has been
18 paid.”.

19 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO P.L. 94-392.**

20 (a) PRIORITY OF BONDS.—Section 3 of Public Law
21 94-392 (48 U.S.C. 1574e) is amended—

22 (1) by striking “priority for payment” and in-
23 serting “a parity lien with every other issue of bonds
24 or other obligations issued for payment”; and

1 (2) by striking “in the order of the date of
2 issue”.

3 (b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by
4 subsection (a) shall apply to obligations issued on or after
5 the date of enactment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 3. VIRGIN ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT ACT.**

7 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
8 “Virgin Islands Development Act of 1997”.

9 (b) **ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**—There is es-
10 tablished a commission to be known as the “Commission
11 on the Economic Future of the Virgin Islands” (in this
12 Act referred to as the “Commission”).

13 (c) **APPOINTED MEMBERS.**—(1) The Commission
14 shall consist of 6 members who shall be appointed by the
15 President.

16 (2) The members appointed pursuant to paragraph
17 (1) shall have a background and experience which shall
18 enable them to contribute to achievement of the purposes
19 of the Commission.

20 (3) 3 of the members appointed pursuant to para-
21 graph (1) shall be selected from nominations made by the
22 Governor of the Virgin Islands.

23 (d) **EX-OFFICIO MEMBER.**—The Secretary of the In-
24 terior shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission.

1 (e) CHAIRPERSON.—The President shall designate 1
2 member from among the members appointed pursuant to
3 subsection (c)(1) the Chairperson of the Committee. Sub-
4 ject to general policies of the Commission, the Chairperson
5 shall be the chief executive officer of the Commission and
6 shall exercise the executive and administrative powers of
7 the Commission. The Chairperson may delegate the per-
8 formance of such executive and administrative functions
9 to the staff of the Commission.

10 (f) VACANCY.—Any vacancy in the Commission shall
11 be filled in the same manner as the original appointment
12 was made.

13 (g) COMPENSATION.—Members of the Commission
14 shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed
15 for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses in-
16 curred by them in the performance of their duties.

17 (h) POWERS.—The Commission may—

18 (1) hold hearings, sit and act at such times and
19 places, take such testimony, and receive evidence as
20 the Committee considers appropriate;

21 (2) use the United States mail in the same
22 manner and under the same conditions as depart-
23 ments and agencies of the United States; and

1 (3) with available funds, incur such expenses
2 and enter into contracts or agreements to carry out
3 the duties of the Commission.

4 (i) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon the
5 request of the Commission, the Administrator of General
6 Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reimburs-
7 able basis, office space, furnishings, equipment, staff, and
8 other administrative services.

9 (j) ASSISTANCE OF FEDERAL AGENCIES AND DE-
10 PARTMENTS.—Upon request of the Commission, the
11 President may direct the head of any Federal agency or
12 department to assist the Commission and if so directed
13 such head shall—

14 (1) furnish, upon request of the Commission,
15 information—

16 (A) that may be necessary for carrying out
17 the functions of the Commission;

18 (B) to the extent permitted by law;

19 (C) within available appropriations; and

20 (D) that is available to or procurable by
21 such department or agency; and

22 (2) detail to temporary duty with the Commis-
23 sion, on a reimbursable basis, such personnel as the
24 Commission may need to carry out its duties. Each

1 such detail shall be without loss of seniority, pay, or
2 other employee status.

3 (k) DUTIES.—(1) The Commission shall make rec-
4 ommendations to the President and Congress on the poli-
5 cies and actions necessary to provide for a secure and self-
6 sustaining future for the local economy of the Virgin Is-
7 lands through 2020 and on the role of the Federal Govern-
8 ment.

9 (2) In developing recommendations pursuant to para-
10 graph (1), the Commission shall—

11 (A) solicit and analyze information on projected
12 private sector development and shifting tourism
13 trends based on alternative forecasts of economic,
14 political, and social conditions in the Caribbean, in-
15 cluding the possible effect of expansion in the near
16 future of Cuba in trade, tourism, and development;

17 (B) analyze capital infrastructure, education,
18 social, health, and environmental needs in light of
19 the forecasts described in subparagraph (A);

20 (C) analyze of the capability of the Virgin Is-
21 lands to meet needs which are projected based on
22 the analysis pursuant to subparagraphs (A) and (B);
23 and

1 (D) assemble relevant demographic, economic,
2 and revenue and expenditure data for the years
3 1972 through 1997.

4 (3) The Commission shall transmit a report which in-
5 cludes its recommendations made pursuant to this section
6 to the President, the Committee on Energy and Natural
7 Resources of the Senate, and the Committee on Resource
8 of the House of Representatives no later than June 30,
9 1999. The report shall set forth the basis for the rec-
10 ommendations and include the analysis made pursuant to
11 paragraph (2)(C).

12 (l) FUNDING.—There is hereby authorized to be ap-
13 propriated to the Secretary of the Interior \$300,000 per
14 year, in fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for the work of the
15 Commission.

16 (m) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall termi-
17 nate 3 months after the report is transmitted pursuant
18 to section (3)(k)(3).

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