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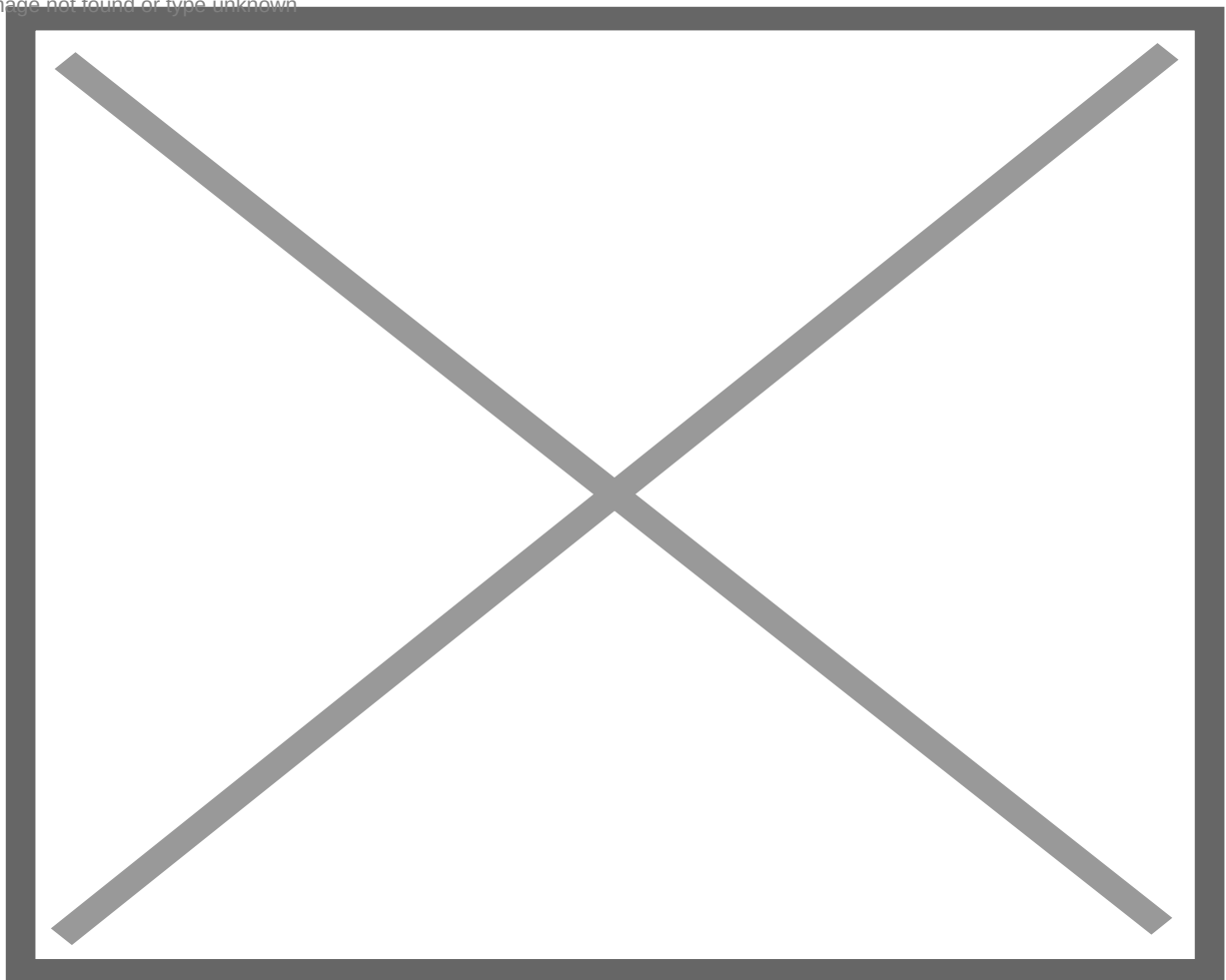
Senators Back Calford Martin's Return to VIHFA Board and New Role on Coastal Zone Commission

Martin, with a strong financial background, seeks to expedite disaster relief and enhance coastal management, receiving unanimous support from the Senate committee

Senate / **Published On August 23, 2024 06:43 AM /**

Nelcia Charlemagne **August 23, 2024**

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Calford Martin By. V.I. LEGISLATURE

Calford Martin has received favorable nominations from the Committee on Rules and Judiciary to simultaneously serve on two boards: the V.I. Coastal Zone Commission, and the V.I. Housing Finance Authority Board of Directors, both for the St. Thomas district.?

Mr. Martin had previously served on the VIHFA Board but stepped down from the role after accepting a managerial position at a financial institution which would have caused a conflict of

interest. He told members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary that he was excited about assuming the role once more. His financial background makes him optimal for providing fiduciary support to both boards.

“I really and truly enjoy that,” he told lawmakers. “As a returning member to this board, I hope to use the experience to benefit our community.”

The former VIFHA board member is aware that the entity has grown exponentially since his previous tenure, “overseeing multiple federal assistance programs.” However, the implementation of several assistance programs leaves much to be desired. “It’s appalling to be on a vessel sailing and see homes today with blue tarps on,” Mr. Martin observed. It’s something he intends to help resolve. “We need to address this. People, years after, should not have to be fetching buckets to catch water.” VIFHA, he insisted, must devise a plan to “get that money out in our community and protect the citizens of the United States Virgin Islands.”?

It’s a goal that pleased Senator Franklin Johnson, who took the opportunity to lament the slow pace of the EnVIision program. “If there’s anything that needs a push, for sure, it’s that. I’m glad to hear you say that,” noted Mr. Johnson.

Despite never serving on an environmental board before, Mr. Martin was equally excited to be part of the Coastal Zone Commission. “I am eager to meet with other board members and see how I can use my knowledge and experience to help accomplish these goals,” he testified. His personal goals include site visits “to determine if regular protocol measures have been adhered to in both tier one and tier two of CZM laws.” He also intends to “become better acquainted with the specifics of the [Comprehensive Water and Land Use] Plan as a member of the CZM Commission.

?Among his other goals: making a number of beaches more accessible for Virgin Islanders. “What is hurtful at times, is to see people building and making it difficult for our residents to have access to some of the most beautiful and private beaches,” noted Mr. Martin. He agreed with Senator Milton Potter that early introduction to coastal zones could foster more interest in coastal zone management and conservation among the youth.

“I would be interested in having some kind of organization within the educational system that will take these young minds and put them on the ocean so they can see what we have.” He referenced the Sea Explorers Group that he participated in at the high school level. “If we were educated on that, we would have an interest in preserving it for the next generation.”

All present committee members voted in favor of Mr. Martin’s dual nominations. His appointments will be considered at an upcoming legislative session.