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Legislature Sends Package of Development, Public Safety, and Revenue Bills to Governor Bryan

From zoning approvals to a revised domestic violence bail law and a hike in the territory's line of credit, lawmakers passed a wide-ranging slate of legislation Wednesday, also confirming key nominees and supporting increased public safety efforts.

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Senator Clifford Joseph, sponsor of legislation clarifying gross receipts tax requirements for all contractors doing business in the Virgin Islands. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

On Wednesday, the 36th Legislature forwarded several bills to Governor Albert Bryan Jr., all expected to have varying benefits for the territory. Nominations, rezoning requests, and other bills

all received majority support during Wednesday's legislative session.

Among them was [Bill 36-0095](#), an act that would allow AC Development, LLC to develop a Planned Area Development in Estate St. Joseph and Rosendahl, St. Thomas. First heard in the Committee of the Whole on Monday, neighboring resident Maria Raimer voiced firm opposition to the project. Lawmakers, however, saw it as an opportunity to construct much-needed housing. "I think that working together, we can have a model of what development can and should be in the territory," remarked Senate President Milton Potter.

Other rezoning requests were voted upon favorably, including [Bill 36-0033](#), which rezones several parcels on the eastern end of St. Thomas from A-2 (Agricultural Zone) to B-3 (Business Scattered), to develop an office. Likewise, [Bill 36-0034](#) received the stamp of approval. A request for a perpetual access easement in Estate La Grange, St. Croix – Bill 36-0082 – was approved. Finally, Bill 36-0095, rezoning a parcel of land in Estate Bakkerroe from R-1 to R-3 was also successful. It brings the property in line with neighboring parcels.

Lawmakers also forwarded a series of bills expected to mitigate and manage criminal activity in the territory.

[Bill 36-0005](#), sponsored by Senator Angel Bolques Jr., seeks to implement a minimum bail amount for domestic violence matters. It was [previously vetoed](#) by Governor Bryan. The revised bill received the backing of several stakeholders, including Attorney General Gordon Rhea and the Women's Coalition of St. Croix.

Legislators again signaled their commitment to increasing traffic fines and establishing an impound lot for the V.I. Police Department, voting in favor of [Bill 36-0036](#). Bolques, speaking on its importance, reminded lawmakers that the bill will "support public safety and also reinvest in those efforts into youth programs for the community."

Also expected to support public safety, albeit in a different way, is [Bill 36-0021](#). It requires healthcare providers to inform patients about the risks of opioid use, including addiction and overdose. The bill was sponsored by Senator Marvin Blyden.

Senator Clifford Joseph sponsored [Bill 36-0063](#), an act amending Virgin Islands Code to clarify that gross receipts taxes must be paid by all contractors doing business in the Virgin Islands, regardless of physical location. "I think it's time we close all the loopholes as it relates to gross receipts," agreed Senator Hubert Frederick. Senator Marise James applauded Joseph for identifying a means of "generating revenue."

Non-germane amendments were made to Bill 35-0063. They included an amendment to [Act 8915](#), increasing the territory's line of credit from \$150 million to \$200 million. Another amendment modifies Title 12, Chapter 21 Section 910 of the Virgin Islands Code relating to [coastal zone permits](#). According to Senator Novelle Francis, "this amendment seeks to increase the amount that's required for each of those areas...originally there was \$75,000 that was required for a minor coastal zone permit, and now that allows for at least \$500,000."

Four individuals nominated by the governor for various positions were also approved by the Legislature on Wednesday. "I find these individuals qualified and suitable for their jobs," remarked Senator Kenneth Gittens, summarizing his colleagues' general sentiments. The approved individuals are:

- [Honorable Jessica Gallivan](#) – Judge, Superior Court of the Virgin Islands
- [Carolyn P. Hermon-Percell, Esq.](#) – University of the Virgin Islands’ Board of Trustees
- [Winston M.A. Williams](#) – Virgin Islands Board of Contractors, Trades, and Crafts
- [Kirk Callwood](#) – Banking Board Virgin Islands Board of Trustees

Governor Bryan is expected to take action on the bills in the coming days.

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