

Rules Committee Advances Streetlight Funding, Marine Safety, and Multiple Bills

The Rules and Judiciary Committee advanced several bills for final consideration, including a \$4 million streetlight funding measure, marine safety penalties, property sales, leases, and changes to minimum wage and government employee candidacy laws.

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The Committee on Rules and Judiciary has approved several pieces of proposed legislation set to be discussed for a final time during the upcoming Legislative session on Monday.

Among them is [Bill 36-0210](#), an act appropriating the sum of \$4,000,000 from the Virgin Islands Insurance Guaranty Fund to the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority for the repair, replacement, and operation of streetlights throughout the territory. The measure, sponsored by

Senator Kurt Violet, received [mixed reactions from lawmakers](#) when it was introduced in December.

The same applied on Thursday, with Senator Angel Bolques insisting that the Legislature is “using a fund that is not intended for this specific purpose.” He lamented that the bill does not explicitly require “any oversight or any ongoing maintenance, or even the incorporation of any energy efficient options.” Mr. Bolques stated that he understands the need for adequate street lighting but felt that the \$4 million could be better utilized for more critical services, such as health and emergency responses.

Senator Clifford Joseph agreed, stating, “I don't think that the whole \$4 million need to go in that direction right now.”

Nonetheless, the bill passed

Lawmakers also voted on [Bill 36-0092](#), a lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and St. John Taxi Services Corporation, for Parcel No. D-2 Estate Cruz Bay Town, Cruz Bay Quarter, St. John. Sean Claxton, who repeatedly advocated for the formalization of the lease in his capacity as the Corporation's president, died in late 2025.

“It really has saddened me that he is not going to be here to see the fruits of his time, fruits of his labor,” Senator Milton Potter commented.

[Bill 36-0217](#) was also passed. It is an act approving the sale of Parcel No. 20-A Hospital Street, Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands by and between the Government of the Virgin Islands and Z Property VI LLC for the sum of \$260,000.

Senator Novelle Francis informed lawmakers that an amendment to Bill 36-0217 is being prepared, which would require that proceeds of the sale be directed to the Historic Preservation Commission for “grants to support initiatives in improving some of our buildings and infrastructure within our town areas.”

Lawmakers also supported [Bill 36-0209](#), an act amending title 23 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 10 to establish civil penalties for disregarding marine advisories and to create the Territorial Marine Safety Fund. Senator Hubert Frederick, sponsor of the bill, argued that individuals who venture out during hazardous weather must understand that “you just can't do stuff like that and get away with it without paying anything, because it's a cost to us as a government.”

The other bills approved on Thursday are:

- [Bill No. 36-0089](#) – An act approving the lease agreement between the Government of the Virgin Islands and PEO Productions, LLC d/b/a WSTA Radio, for Parcel No. 121 Submarine Base, No. 6, Southside Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Parcel No. 167 Sub Base, No. 6, Southside Quarter, St. Thomas and Parcel No. 171 Sub Base, No. 6, Southside Quarter, St. Thomas.
- [Bill No. 36-0030](#) An act amending title 24 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1, section 4, increasing the Virgin Islands minimum wage.

- [Bill No. 36-0208](#) A resolution recognizing United States Senator Mike Crapo for his instrumental role in securing the historic increase in the rum cover over tax reimbursement for the Virgin Islands.
- [Bill No. 36-0105](#) An act amending title 7 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 13, subchapter III to prohibit the possession, sale, or manufacture of tetrahydrocannabinolic acid, delta-6 THC, delta-8 THC and delta-10 THC products in the Virgin Islands and for other related purposes.
- [Bill No. 36-0184](#) An act amending title 22 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 14, The Virgin Islands Insurance Holding Company System Regulatory Act to implement revisions that were made to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.
- [Bill No. 36-0134](#) An act repealing and reenacting title 18 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1, section 2 relating to government employees' eligibility for elected offices, to allow government employees to run for political office while actively employed, unless specifically prohibited by federal or other laws.

Each measure now moves to the final legislative stage of consideration before being sent to Government House for ratification.