

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Safeguards Removed From Beeston Hill Rezoning Bill, Government House Says Governor's Original Plan Was Housing-Focused

Governor Bryan's proposal included restrictions tying the 15.942-acre rezoning to a 24-unit residential development and requiring legislative consent for other uses; those provisions, Government House says, are absent in the version under review.

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Government House said Monday that the rezoning legislation Governor Albert Bryan Jr. submitted for a portion of Estate Beeston Hill, South Portion, St. Croix, is materially different from the version currently being considered by the 36th Legislature,

emphasizing that the governor's original proposal included permanent safeguards tied specifically to housing.

The clarification concerns legislation transmitted by Governor Bryan to support new housing stock with permanent protections. According to Government House, the bill submitted by the Governor "is not the same legislation the Legislature has announced it is considering."

The governor's proposal was drafted to address what Government House described as the territory's urgent housing demand, particularly as recovery activity and economic growth continue to place additional pressure on an already tight housing market. The administration stated that the measure was structured to expand housing options in a limited and responsible way, with firm, permanent protections designed to prevent the rezoning from being used for unrelated development.

As submitted, Mr. Bryan's legislation contains three sections.

Section 1 amends the St. Croix zoning map to rezone approximately 15.942 acres of the Remainder of Estate Beeston Hill, South Portion, Matricular No. 6A, Company Quarter, from R-1, Residential Low Density, to B-2, Business Secondary Neighborhood, as shown on survey drawing A9-3C008.

Section 2 establishes what Government House described as the central safeguard of the proposal. It limits development to the proposed construction of a 24-unit clustered residential development on 3 to 4 acres, inclusive of a playground, green space, and an outdoor meeting space. It further prohibits any other development or construction of any kind on the property unless the Legislature provides express consent.

Section 3 reinforces that restriction by requiring that the prohibition on development without legislative consent run with the land in perpetuity, regardless of ownership.

Government House stated that the version of the legislation now under consideration by lawmakers removed Sections 2 and 3 of the Governor's original proposal. Those sections, according to the administration, were included specifically to ensure that the rezoning remained tied to housing and to preserve legislative control over any future activity beyond the limited residential footprint.

The administration said the governor's measure reflects a measured approach to expanding housing options while protecting the public interest and ensuring responsible growth.

Government House urged that public discussion of the Beeston Hill rezoning be grounded in the actual bill submitted by Governor Bryan, including its stated housing purpose and its permanent safeguards.