

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Hemp Industry Bill Facing Senate Scrutiny For The Second Time

VIC News / **Published On June 04, 2015 05:15 PM /**

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ST. THOMAS -- The Committee on Economic Development, Agriculture and Planning will revisit Bill 31-100 on Thursday, according to a press release issued by Sen. Terrence "Positive" Nelson's office on Wednesday.

The Bill is an Act amending title 7 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 1, which allows for the cultivation of hemp and other related purposes. It was first heard in the Committee on Monday August 11, 2014.

Paul Chakroff, a board certified environmental professional (CEP), expressed his support of the bill. He stated, "I support viable, sustainable and environmentally friendly

development that enhances and supports St. Croix's agricultural sector and the St. Croix economy. Act No. 31-100 clearly meets these criteria and I support it.”

All but one agency agreed with the legislation as it was written. The members of the committee, in the 30<sup>th</sup> Legislature, decided it should be withheld and was not placed in the committee to be reheard until recently. The hearing is scheduled for 4 p.m. today on St. Thomas in the legislative chambers.

Yoki K. Hanley, the owner of Itiba. LLC expressed her support for the use of cannabis for the island of St. Croix.

Said Hanley: “For the Territory on the whole, it will mean job creation and an increase in the tax base as new businesses will be created from the farmers who are now growing the hemp, to the laborers who are harvesting the hemp, and the processing plants that will be created to process the hemp plant and seeds for oil, food, clothing, etc.”

During the 2012 General Election, 60% of voters casted their vote in support of an industrial hemp industry in the Virgin Islands.

“Again, I believe when the people take their time to cast their vote on a referendum we as policy makers should respect their wishes. I have addressed all the concerns that was mentioned during the committee hearing in held in 2014. I look forward to the industrial hemp bill passing the senate and being signed into law,” Sen. Nelson, the bill's sponsor, remarked.

If approved, the legislation will be sent to the full body for approval.