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## Bill Sponsored by Senator Gittens Transferring Land From WAPA to VIPD for State-of-the-Art Police Station Wins Approval

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**Hannah's Rest site proposed for a new St. Croix police station. By. OFFICE OF SENATOR KENNETH L. GITTENS**

Senator Kenneth Gittens proposal to acquire land for a new, state-of-the-art police station in Frederiksted received unanimous approval Friday from the 33rd Legislature's Committee on Government Operations, Consumer Affairs, Energy, Environment and Planning.

Testifiers from the V.I. Police Department, Property & Procurement and the V.I. Water & Power Authority also expressed their support for Bill No. 33-0358, which transfers two acres of land from WAPA to the Government of the Virgin Islands for the construction of a new police facility

at #51 Hannah's Rest, Frederiksted, St. Croix.

According to Mr. Gittens's office, the senator pointed out that the land transfer came at no cost to the government and provided leverage in securing federal funding for a modern police station designed to better meet the needs of the community.

"I continue to be very concerned about the exorbitant rents our Government is paying for what are often substandard facilities," he said. "Construction of a new police station is a significant cost saving measure in addition to assuring our officers and civilian staff have safe and adequate work spaces."

A former law enforcement officer, Mr. Gittens is said to have emphasized the importance of the new Frederiksted police station being built to withstand hurricanes and to serve as a satellite emergency operations center in the event of a disaster.

"Law enforcement must constantly grow and change to meet the needs of the community it serves," he said. "I envision this new police station as not simply a place for VIPD to operate, but also as a center for positive community engagement with law enforcement. Building better relationships and trust with the citizens that our police serve is critical to their effectiveness."

According to the senator's office, Mr. Gittens has also worked to identify property in the St. Thomas-St. John district suitable for new police facilities. Legislation to transfer property on St. Thomas should be heard in the weeks ahead, he said.

The senator remains deeply appreciative of the support he received for the property transfer legislation and thanked his colleagues, testifiers, and the public for their input, according to the release.

"Bill #33-0358 is the first step towards this much-needed modern, hardened Frederiksted station," Mr. Gittens said. "During today's hearing we learned of even more opportunities for federal funding for this critical facility. I look forward to this measure receiving final approval."