

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AGRICULTURE AND PLANNING

BILL NO. 31-0017

Thirty-first Legislature of the Virgin Islands

February 4, 2015

An Act amending Virgin Islands Code, title 3, chapter 19 by adding section 334 relating to the development of marine tourism in the Virgin Islands

PROPOSED BY: Senator Janette Millin Young
Co Sponsor: Clifford F. Graham

1 **WHEREAS**, the Legislature recognizes that there is an important public interest in
2 facilitating boating activities, marine tourism, marine-related industries, and access to the
3 Territory's marine and coastal resources; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the Legislature finds that the development and promotion of the marine
5 industry and marine tourism are vital to sustaining and growing our tourism product, competing
6 globally and advancing the economy and prosperity of the Virgin Islands; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the Virgin Islands is an excellent location for boating, yachting, kayaking,
8 diving, water skiing, windsurfing, parasailing, diving, snorkeling, swimming, whale watching,
9 fishing, and other marine-related recreational activities; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the Virgin Islands possesses rich and complex seascapes, ecosystems and
2 pristine coastal waterways that can contribute substantially to tourism, recreation and sports; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the Legislature declares that it is a public policy of the Virgin Islands and in
4 the public interest to promote job creation and economic development in marine tourism and
5 marine-related industries and to promote the development of sustainable marine tourism and
6 marine infrastructure in Territory; Now, Therefore,

7 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

8 **SECTION 1.** Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 19 is amended by adding section 334
9 to read as follows:

10 “§334. (a) The Commissioner shall develop an integrated plan to make fuller use of the
11 Virgin Islands’ water resources, marine industries and marine facilities to compete globally in
12 the marine tourism industry and shall promote and advertise on a global scale marine tourism in
13 the Virgin Islands.

14 (b) In developing and promoting marine tourism in the Virgin Islands the
15 Commissioner shall:

16 (1) appoint or hire such qualified employees as fiscally practicable whose
17 primary role is the promotion, marketing, development and implementation of programs
18 for the advancement of sustainable marine tourism and marine-related activities on an
19 international scale to attract more international Regattas, boat shows, yachting, sport
20 fishing and marine-related industries;

21 (2) assess and evaluate new and ongoing programs and policies as they relate
22 to the promotion of marine tourism and recreational boating activities and marine-related
23 industries;

1 (3) prepare strategic plans for the promotion of sustainable marine tourism
2 and the maximization of the economic, social and environmental benefits from marine
3 tourism and marine-related industries;

4 (4) establish programs and partnerships with public and private entities to
5 develop and implement new policies, technology, strategies, relationships, and sources of
6 funding for promoting and marketing sustainable marine tourism;

7 (5) develop innovative marketing tools, coordinate and participate in
8 marketing efforts to enhance the competitiveness of Virgin Islands as a marine tourism
9 destination through diversifying products and services, and uses of available resources;

10 (6) identify opportunities and support and encourage activities, including
11 training programs for developing marine and coastal tourism, marketing, expansion of
12 boating, boat building, outfitting and related industries and creating jobs in these
13 industries ;

14 (7) hold public meetings and forums and foster public understanding of and
15 involvement in marine tourism programs and activities, and promote the protection of
16 environmental resources and encourage the development of working waterfronts and the
17 infrastructure necessary to sustain marine tourism and the marine industry and water-
18 dependent uses of the marine and coastal waters.;

19 (8) advise the Governor, government departments and agencies, and the
20 Legislature on issues pertaining to developing , promoting and marketing marine tourism
21 and related marine industries; and

22 (9) engage in any other activities that are necessary or appropriate to
23 accomplish purposes of this section.”
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BILL SUMMARY

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3 This bill amends title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 19. Chapter 19 establishes the
4 Department of Tourism and prescribes the powers and duties of that department.
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6 The bill adds section 334, which specifically governs the promotion of marine tourism.
7 Whereas, section 331 gives the Department broad powers to develop and promote tourism
8 generally, proposed section 334 mandates focus on developing, promoting and marketing marine
9 tourism and encouraging growth of marine-related industries.
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11 The measure requires the Commissioner of Tourism to appoint or hire employees, subject
12 to availability of funds, to compete globally for the marine tourism market and attract more
13 international Regattas, boat shows, yachting, sport fishing and related marine industries. The
14 measure requires the Department of Tourism to develop innovative marketing tools, coordinate
15 and participate in marketing efforts to enhance the competitiveness of Virgin Islands as a marine
16 tourism destination through diversifying products and services.
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20 **BR15-0203/January 23, 2015/YLT**
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