

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND AGRICULTURE

BILL NO. 33-0065

Thirty-Third Legislature of the Virgin Islands

April 23, 2019

An Act requiring the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a Well Drilling Unit Program

PROPOSED BY: Senator Allision L. DeGazon

1 **WHEREAS**, Global warming is a long-term rise in the average temperature of the

2 Earth's climate system;

3 **WHEREAS**, Global warming is merely an aspect of climate change shown by

4 temperature measurements and by multiple effects of the warming;

5 **WHEREAS**, the terms “global warming” and “climate change” are commonly used

6 interchangeably;

7 **WHEREAS**, climate change includes both global warming and its effects, such as

8 changes to precipitation and impacts that differ by region;

9 **WHEREAS**, global warming is taking its toll by severely altering the climate pattern

10 worldwide;

1 **WHEREAS**, future climate change effects are predicted to include rising sea levels,
2 ocean acidification and regional changes in precipitation;

3 **WHEREAS**, anticipated regional changes in precipitation include, but are not limited
4 to, more frequent extreme weather events such as heat waves, droughts, wildfires, heavy
5 rainfall, and resulting floods;

6 **WHEREAS**, any of these effects global warming effects will negatively impact farmers,
7 as without assistance they will be unable to utilize or control excess water or be able to sustain
8 their crops and animals in cases of drought;

9 **WHEREAS**, implementing rainwater harvesting and establishing well unit systems can
10 avert the negative effects of flooding, while also storing excess water to be utilized during dry
11 periods;

12 **WHEREAS**, rainwater harvesting and well units are a natural partner to the agriculture
13 industry and are critical to farmers' ability to prosper;

14 **WHEREAS**, well unit systems can be used to collect water suitable for irrigation, herd
15 watering, washing animals and stalls as well as residential uses such as toilet flushing and
16 laundry machinery cleaning, and filter backwashing for water treatment and sewage systems,
17 among other uses;

18 **WHEREAS**, rainwater harvesting or well units can reduce stormwater runoff which in
19 turn can reduce contamination of surface water with pesticides, sediment, metals, and
20 fertilizers;

21 **WHEREAS**, by reducing stormwater runoff, rainwater harvesting or well units can
22 reduce a storm's peak flow volume and velocity in local waterways, thereby reducing the
23 potential for streambank erosion;

