



The Virgin Islands

# DAILY NEWS



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## St. Thomas Yacht Club rebuilds



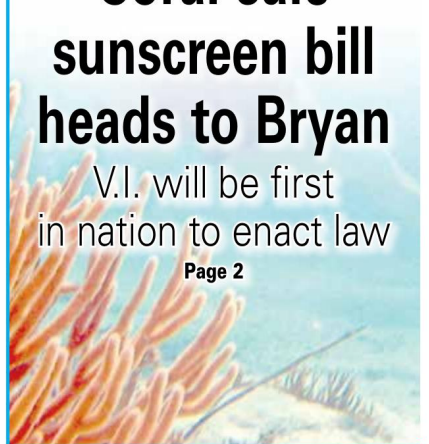
Using a front loader on a barge, construction workers install pilings as work continues on repairs to the main dock at the St. Thomas Yacht Club, which was heavily damaged during Hurricane Irma in September 2017. According to club officials, work on the repairs to

Daily News photo by BILL KISER

## Coral-safe sunscreen bill heads to Bryan

V.I. will be first in nation to enact law

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## University extends president's contract

# Senators OK landmark toxic sunscreen ban

By A.J. RAO  
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Following a unanimous vote in the VI. Legislature on Tuesday, the Virgin Islands is poised to be the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement a ban on sunscreen products harmful to both humans and marine life.

Bill 33-0043, which favorably passed the full Senate body, targets oxybenzone, octinoxate and octocrylene, three ingredients which are not only common in sunscreen products, but scientifically linked to coral and marine life damage and even hormone disruptions in humans.

The addition of octocrylene means the bill goes further than any similar piece of legislation in the country. And with the full ban taking effect on March 30, 2020, the bill will also be implemented sooner, beating out Hawaii and Key West, Fla.

Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. is expected to sign the bill in July.

Senate Majority Leader Marvin Blyden, who sponsored the bill, called it a “historic piece of legislation.”

“We are addressing a problem that we have the power to solve,” Blyden said. “This bill helps to promote the Virgin Islands as an eco-friendly destination and it actually saves our coral reefs from being destroyed. It supports the sustainability of our local seafood supply, which we’re heavily dependent on. And it also helps to promote human health, as the ingredients are shown to have a negative impact on health and development.”

Sen. Janelle Sarauw, a co-sponsor of the bill, who introduced the amendment that added octocrylene to the measure, echoed Blyden’s remarks.

“We have lost 80% of our coral reef cover, and we’re fighting against a lot of big issues that are beyond our control,” Sarauw said. “Go on any given day to Coki Point or Magens



Photos by VI. LEGISLATURE

Harith Wickrema, president of Island Green Living Association, center, is joined by Senate Majority Leader Marvin Blyden, left, and Sen. Janelle Sarauw on Tuesday at the Legislature on St. Thomas. Blyden sponsored and Sarauw co-sponsored Bill 33-0043, which makes it illegal to sell, offer for sale or distribute sunscreen products with oxybenzone, octinoxate and octocrylene, all harmful to coral and other marine life.



effective protection to the local policyholders.

Bill 33-0016, which creates the Risk Management and Own Risk and Solvency Assessment Act and further updates the insurance laws of the Virgin Islands.

Bill 33-0099, which requires the VI. Bureau of Motor Vehicles to remit to the Finance Department \$75,000 of the money collected and reserved for Centennial Commission to be deposited into the General Fund to fund the participation of little league baseball teams in the 2019 Virgin Islands Regional Tournament.

Bill 33-0030, which requires the annual renewal of trade name registrations, and increases the fee from \$50 to \$100.

Violet’s bill — Bill 33-0044 — that would require the VI. Taxi Cab Commission to implement an electronic payment option for its taxi operators was held in session for further discussion.

### Amendments

The following non-germane amendments were added to Bill 33-0030 and passed:

Benta added an amendment that ensures local high school students who were displaced by hurricanes Irma and Maria and later graduated from a mainland school in 2018 or 2019 will still be eligible for the University of the Virgin Islands’ free tuition program.

Sarauw added an amendment that updates enforcement of the VI. Legislature’s subpoenas. If someone does not respond to a subpoena, the matter will be settled by the VI. Superior Court and the VI. attorney general, as opposed to the U.S. District Court and U.S. Attorney.

Sarauw added another amendment that takes power away from the chairperson of the VI. Casino Control Commission and gives it to the commission board, as a way to prevent