



**GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Public Services Commission



**PUBLIC NOTICE AND INVITATION TO COMMENT
REGARDING VIRGIN ISLANDS TELEPHONE CORP.
Docket No. 690
Petition for Forbearance**

The Public Services Commission has received a petition from the Virgin Islands Telephone Corp. (“VITELCO”; doing business as “Viya” seeking “regulatory forbearance.” In very simple terms, the basis of VITELCO’s request is that the telecommunications market has significantly changed and due to the competitive nature of the market, the Commission should relieve VITELCO of continued rate regulation and other regulatory requirements that are not applied to other telecommunications carriers.

VITELCO has historically been the single landline telephone carrier in the Virgin Islands and has had a franchise for that service for more than 60 years. The Company’s local operations are subject to regulation by the PSC and interstate operations are regulated by the FCC. Federal law opened the nationwide landline telecommunications market to competition in 1996 but granted a temporary exemption from some provisions to small rural telephone carriers like VITELCO. Notwithstanding this exemption, VITELCO has faced growing competition from wireless carriers and internet service providers. Most recently, it lost federal universal service funding to upgrade or rebuild its network to a wireline broadband competitor. The Company argues that continuing traditional regulation is no longer necessary or in the public interest since it is no longer a dominant provider of telecommunications services.

Prior to taking any action on this petition, which has been assigned Docket No. 690, the Commission will be accepting comments from the public and will conduct a public hearing. The comment period will be open until Tuesday, January 31, 2023.

The petition may be downloaded from the Commission’s website (www.psc.vi.gov) or you may contact the Commission’s offices to obtain a copy. The Commission can be reached at 340-776-1291 (St. Thomas; Ms. Tisean Hendricks or Ms. Symra Hendrickson) or 340-778-6010 (Ms. Madona Abraham). **In addition, you can visit our social media page for updated information at www.facebook.com/@VIPSC1965”.**

In order to make your comments more effective, the Commission requests that you submit comments in writing to the Commission on or before Tuesday, January 31, 2023. Comments may be submitted via mail, hand-delivery, or email, at the following addresses:

Email:

tisean.hendricks@psc.vi.gov

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Regarding Virgin Islands Telephone Corp.
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Mailing Address:

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St. Thomas, USVI 00804

Hand Delivery:

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Tel. (340) 776-1291
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On St. Croix

Mid-West Commercial Building, Suite 1-2
Plot 3 of Parcel 2 Estate Carlton
Frederiksted, St. Croix VI 00840
Tel. (340) 778-6010

After comments are received, the Public Services Commission will schedule a hearing on the Petition for Forbearance, and public notice will be provided.