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June 30, 2026

The Honorable Tom Tiffany
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I write in strong support of H.R. 8121, legislation introduced by Congresswoman Stacy E. Plaskett to designate the Christiansted Bandstand in Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, as the “Peter G. Thurland, Sr., Bandstand.”

As a member of the 19th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, I sponsored legislation to name the Christiansted Bandstand at the Christiansted National Historic Site on St. Croix which was favorably adopted and signed into law by the Governor of the Virgin Islands. However, since the property is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, we were advised that it had to be approved by Congress to have such a designation.

As a young boy growing up on St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, one of the family activities was to attend regular concerts of the St. Croix Community Band under the direction of Mr. Peter G. Thurland, Sr. held at the Christiansted Bandstand. The Band included some members who had served in the U. S. Naval Band under the Navy’s first Black bandmaster, Alton Adams, Sr. who was from the Virgin Islands. Additionally, Mr. Thurland worked on the construction and design of the Christiansted Bandstand as he was a master craftsman and a skillful cabinet maker.

Mr. Thurland’s mentorship and tutelage of many youths in the community enabled them to become professional musicians in the Virgin Islands and the United States. I consider myself to have been one who has benefited from his generosity and to have been one who has been a member of the St. Croix Community Band, who continues to play my baritone horn with local bands and in church. Certainly, the naming of the Christiansted Bandstand after Mr. Peter G. Thurland, Sr. would be a fitting tribute to his legacy and would also serve as an inspiration to many young people in our community.

I, therefore, respectfully request favorable consideration of H.R. 8121 by the Committee and the House of Representatives.

Respectfully,

St. Claire N. Williams
Former Senator
Legislature of the Virgin Islands
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