

**Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett, Statement for the Record
Subcommittee on Federal Lands, Committee on Natural Resources
July 1, 2026, Hearing on H.R. 8121: To Designate the Christiansted
Bandstand as the "Peter G. Thurland, Sr., Bandstand"**

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and Members of the Subcommittee on Federal Lands: thank you for holding this hearing and considering H.R. 8121, legislation I introduced to designate the Christiansted Bandstand in Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, as the "Peter G. Thurland, Sr., Bandstand." I look forward to working with Members on both sides of the aisle to advance this legislation.

The Christiansted Bandstand is one of the most significant cultural landmarks in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Located in the heart of Christiansted, for over a century, it has served as a gathering place for residents and visitors and as the center of St. Croix's musical and civic life. H.R. 8121 would designate that landmark in honor of the man most responsible for its character and continuity — Peter Gregory Thurland, Sr.

Mr. Thurland was born on February 19, 1892, in Christiansted, St. Croix. On March 31, 1917, Mr. Thurland performed with the Christiansted Industrial Brass Band at the formal transfer ceremony on the Christiansted Wharf — present at the very moment the Virgin Islands became part of the United States. Following the transfer of the Virgin Islands from Denmark to the United States, he enlisted in the United States Navy on June 12, 1917, and served as a member of the Navy Band. During his service, he was instrumental in the physical construction and design of the Christiansted Bandstand — contributing to its creation with his own hands. He performed there with the Christiansted Naval Band until his honorable discharge in September 1921.

In 1938, Mr. Thurland founded the St. Croix Community Band, which performed free monthly concerts at the Bandstand for three consecutive decades. He trained generations of young musicians and led the band until

1968. He was also a master craftsman and cabinetmaker whose contributions extended well beyond the stage.

My own parents talked about the many activities the Bandstand represented as children growing up in the town of Christiansted, St. Croix in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, one of our iconic period painters, Leo Carty, used the Bandstand in some of his most memorable paintings. My own children have played around the Bandstand without having a marker to understand who built the gathering spot. A naming with a marker sharing the creator and the history of the Bandstand could only bring our island closer.

This legislation was first introduced by Congressman Ron de Lugo in the 103rd Congress. I am proud to carry it forward in the 119th Congress. The Thurland family has long advocated for this recognition, and their persistence reflects the esteem in which Peter Thurland is held across St. Croix.

Peter G. Thurland, Sr. helped construct the Christiansted Bandstand, served his country with distinction, and dedicated decades to the cultural life of St. Croix. His name belongs on that landmark. I urge the Subcommittee's favorable consideration and hope that H.R. 8121 will be included in the next markup, advance to the House floor for a vote, or be carried as part of a federal lands package. I thank my colleagues for their attention to this bill.