



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
340-774-0001**

**VIRGIN ISLANDS OBSERVANCE OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY**

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BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the annual observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day is an occasion for Virgin Islanders of Indigenous Amerindian Caribbean Descent to reaffirm their patriotic ties to the original peoples of the Caribbean and the United States of America, and their cultural ties with Indigenous People, their traditions and heritage throughout the lands of the Caribbean, Americas and the world. All citizens of the diverse ethnic and cultural communities in the Territory are invited to acknowledge and celebrate the vital individual, community, and institutional contributions of Indigenous Caribbean Amerindians and all Indigenous People of the world to the economic, political, cultural, scientific, educational, spiritual and religious life of the Territory; and

WHEREAS, on Indigenous People's Day, we celebrate the invaluable contributions and resilience of Indigenous peoples, recognize their inherent sovereignty, and commit to honoring the Federal Government's trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, our country was conceived on a promise of equality and opportunity for all people; a promise that, despite the extraordinary progress we have made through the years, we have never fully lived up to. That is especially true when it comes to upholding the rights and dignity of the Indigenous People who were here long before the colonization of the Americas began. For generations, Federal policies systematically sought to assimilate and displace Native people and eradicate Native cultures. Today, we recognize Indigenous People's resilience and strength as well as the immeasurable positive impact that they have made on every aspect of American society. We also recommit to supporting a new, brighter future of promise and equity for Tribal Nations, a future grounded in Tribal sovereignty and respect for the human rights of Indigenous people in the Americas and around the world; and

WHEREAS, in the first week of President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s administration he issued a memorandum reaffirming the Nation's solemn trust and treaty obligations to American Indians and Alaska Natives Tribal Nations and directed the heads of executive departments and agencies to engage in regular, meaningful, and robust consultations with tribal officials. He said it is a priority of his

administration to make respect for Tribal sovereignty and self-governance the cornerstone of Federal Indian Policy. He stated history demonstrates that Native American people and our Nation on a whole are best served when Tribal governments are empowered to lead their communities and when formulating Federal policy that affects Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the contributions that Indigenous peoples have made throughout history, in public service, entrepreneurship, scholarships, the arts, and countless other fields are integral to our Nation, our culture, and our society. Indigenous peoples have served, and continue to serve, in the United States Armed Forces with distinction and honor at one of the highest rates of any group defending our security every day; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government has a solemn obligation to lift up and invest in the future of Indigenous people and empower Tribal Nations to govern their own communities and make their own decisions. We must never forget the centuries-long campaign of violence, displacement, assimilation, and terror wrought upon Native communities and Tribal Nations throughout our country. Today, we acknowledge the significant sacrifices made by the Native peoples of this country and recognize their ongoing contributions to our Nation's first inhabitants and the Tribal Nations that continue to thrive today; and

WHEREAS, research, DNA-testing, and oral tradition have proven that there are descendants of Indigenous Amerindian people living in the Virgin Islands. The Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands has been directed by Maekiaphan Phillips since May 2012. The tribal membership of the Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands, as attested by their signatures and in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, formally conferred on Maekiaphan Phillips the rank and honor of Kasike (Chief) and Chairwoman of the Guainia Taino of the Virgin Islands' Tribal Council; and

WHEREAS, Protections of Indigenous Amerindian sacred sites, lands, artifacts and cultural heritage traditions is a prime goal of the Administration, including Salt River Bay, Maroon Sanctuary in Annaly Bay, and Salt Pond in St. Croix; Reef Bay, Hull Bay and Cinnamon Bay in St. John; and Botany Bay, Magens Bay, and Tutu Park in St. Thomas; and other sacred VI historic and cultural heritage sites. We also seek to extend the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of Public Law 101-601 dated November 16.1990 "an Act to provide for the protection of Native American graves, and for other purposes."; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Amerindian people of the Caribbean have contributed to the national tradition of every aspect of our society—from agriculture and science to business and the arts. As the international community celebrates and commemorates the Indigenous People let us honor their history, culture, and essential roles within the American and Virgin Islands heritage narratives. Respectful Indigenous Amerindian historic preservation, educational research, and heritage restoration have been spearheaded by the Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands, the Guainia Taino Tribe of the Virgin Islands (British), the Guainia Taino Tribe of Boriken, and Opi'a Taino International, Inc., including establishing alliances, ancestral support and cooperative agreements with the United Confederation of Taino People. With sacred intentions and respect for this rich cultural heritage of the Americas, these historic observances and annual events provide a foundation for the creation of a collaborative and cooperative entity within the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean for the territory to recognize, unite,

restore, preserve and respect for Indigenous Amerindian people, traditions, heritage, land, life, and sacred resources; and

WHEREAS, on Indigenous Peoples' Day we honor America's first inhabitants and the Tribal Nations that continue to thrive today. I encourage everyone to celebrate the many Indigenous communities and cultures that make up our great country.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Albert Bryan, Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the Authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim October 10, 2022, Indigenous Peoples' Day throughout the United States Virgin Islands. May our communities continue to ring bells of freedom with respect, solidarity, and harmony with our regional, national, and international sisters and brothers commemorating observing, proclaiming, and celebrating Indigenous People of the World events.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States to be affixed at Christiansted, St. Croix, the Virgin Islands this 4th day of September, A.D. 2022.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Albert Bryan Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tregenza A. Roach", written over a horizontal line.

Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.
Lieutenant Governor