



Improving the Quality of Life
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December 15, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515- 0508

Dear Madam Speaker:

Thank you for your longstanding support of America's unionized workers.

Union leadership throughout the United States Virgin Islands stand united in support of the economic development agreements between the USVI government and Diageo and Fortune Brands. It is our belief that such public-private partnerships will strengthen our local rum industry, create and protect union jobs and benefit residents and ensure the territory's economic stability for decades.

I regret that Puerto Rico has attempted to entice the Congress into mediating a private business matter. The facts in the case are clear. Diageo decided to relocate from Puerto Rico and sought to establish outside of the United States until they approached the USVI. The agreement struck by the USVI is the only reason Diageo's jobs and economic impact will remain on American soil. As a result of governmental partnerships with Diageo and Fortune Brand, both companies will remain on American soil for at least thirty years.

These agreements will create state of the art distilleries that modernize the global rum industry and set new environmental standards for environmental sustainability. Now Puerto Rico is attempting to overturn the deal through federal legislation which will imperil up to 2,000 unionized public sector jobs. The thirty year duration of the agreement ensures that generations of Virgin Islanders will benefit from direct and indirect union jobs while increasing governmental resources.

Virgin Islanders are patriotic American citizens who have served in the U.S. military for generations. Using the rum excise tax cover-over program to grow the territory's economy, generate jobs and provide for infrastructure improvements is sound public policy. These innovative agreements will benefit the USVI, thousands of current unionized workers and future generations.

I urge you to reject any attempt to legislate restrictions to the rum cover-over program that has so much potential to benefit the Virgin Islands and American citizens residing in the territory.

Sincerely,

Luis A. "Tito" Morales
President

cc: John P. deJongh
Honorable Governor of the U.S.V.I.

Donna M. Christian Christensen
Honorable U.S.V.I. Delegate to Congress