

# FEMA Commits Additional \$3.2 Billion Toward Utility, Road Paving and Education Projects in the U.S. Virgin Islands

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**ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands** – The recent obligation of \$3.2 billion toward projects to rebuild the potable water distribution system and repave roads across St. Croix and replace the utility's metering infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands, highlights FEMA's continued partnership with the Government of the Virgin Islands in strengthening critical infrastructure damaged during hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017.

The St. Croix island-wide potable water distribution system replacement project with a FEMA obligation of \$1.25 billion provides the Territory the funding to replace pump stations, water tanks, piping and fire hydrants in Christiansted and Frederiksted. The prudent replacement of St. Croix's potable water distribution system paves a path for the transformation of this critical service to be approved to industry standards.

In addition to the St. Croix potable water distribution system replacement project, FEMA's partnership with the USVI has led to an obligation of \$2.5 million to replace the intake and bubble screens for the Richmond East Potable Water Distribution Sector. The fully automated bubble screen system will be built to improve the quality of the Estate Richmond Desalination Plant's desalinated water and capture foreign particles such as sargassum.

The St. Croix Island-Wide Unified Road Paving project with a FEMA obligation of \$1.75 billion consolidates Public Assistance funding to allow the Territory to repair over 481 miles of the island's roads, including curbs, culverts, and ramps that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), where required by code. The road paving project would start after the replacement of St. Croix's potable water, wastewater and electric undergrounding systems are completed.



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Other obligated projects to support the transformation of the U.S. Virgin Islands' utility infrastructure include the electrical metering system replacement across the Territory and the placement of additional composite power poles on St. Thomas. FEMA has committed \$173.9 million for the Territory to remove and replace 58,660 electric Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters in the USVI.

As well, FEMA continues to invest in hazard mitigation measures for the Territory to strengthen the resilience of the USVI's electrical distribution system with an obligation of \$57.8 million to replace an additional 934 composite power poles on St. Thomas.

FEMA continues to focus on collaboration with our territorial and other federal partners on recovery from Irma and Maria by providing the Government of the Virgin Islands the technical and financial resources to replace infrastructure built to withstand future storms.

"We welcome the opportunity to continue working in collaboration with the Territory to rebuild damaged infrastructure that will serve the people of the Virgin Islands for years to come," said FEMA U.S. Virgin Islands Recovery Director Kristen Hodge. "The consolidated repaving project is an example of how agencies can work together to consolidate and streamline recovery efforts and the utility projects mark our commitment to working with the Territory to strengthen the power grid and potable water distribution system in the U.S. Virgin Islands."

Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Director of the Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery, said, "The notification of these obligations exemplifies the consistent effort and collaboration between the Government of the Virgin Islands and FEMA. Securing the funds for these critical projects is a monumental step towards executing the Rebuild USVI initiative, which will transform the territory's schools, healthcare facilities, and utility systems."

"FEMA's commitment of \$3.2 billion to the U.S. Virgin Islands' recovery is an unprecedented commitment from a valued partner that the Territory celebrates," said Governor Albert Bryan Jr. "This much-needed financial support allows the U.S. Virgin Islands to forge ahead with essential infrastructure projects including potable water delivery, energy distribution, repaving efforts and repairs to educational institutions that our community will benefit from for years to come."



In addition to the utility and road paving projects, FEMA has obligated \$3.5 million for repairs to five buildings and grounds damaged by Hurricane Maria at the Virgin Islands Department of Education's St. Croix headquarters.

FEMA also continues to partner with the University of the Virgin Islands to repair and harden the power grid at the Orville E. Kean Campus on St. Thomas. A federal share of \$6.3 million will go toward the university's lighting and power project, which includes the removal and replacement of solar panel LED light poles, transformers, and generators at its St. Thomas campus.

The university's project on St. Thomas includes a \$49,000 hazard mitigation proposal to protect critical campus infrastructure from water infiltration in the event of catastrophic weather.

As of today, FEMA has committed \$15 billion through its Public Assistance program toward emergency and permanent repairs for infrastructure damaged during the 2017 hurricanes. Of the \$15 billion, about \$1.2 billion is approved toward hazard mitigation measures to help break the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction.

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