

Partnerships Energize Projects to Strengthen a Legacy of Resilience for the U.S. Virgin Islands

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ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands -- Coordination to break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage continues between FEMA, the U.S. Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery, and the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency. This effort has led to \$93.03 million obligated for projects to reduce the loss of life and property from disasters through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Approved projects this spring focus on housing resilience, drainage improvements, slope stabilization, power/energy resilience, and strengthening critical facilities, including provision of safe rooms.

"Long-term strategies for protecting people and property from disasters is what strengthens a culture of resilience. Hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged homes, roads and power poles across the U.S. Virgin Islands within a few hours in 2017. FEMA and our territorial partners will continue to focus on equitable and innovative solutions to make communities more sustainable to mitigate the impacts of future storms," said Acting Recovery Director John Covell.

Collaboration with the St. John Community Foundation focuses on making housing more resilient for Virgin Islanders. In May, the foundation was awarded \$469,614 for a residential safe rooms project through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

- This project includes a residential retrofit and building of safe rooms for 18 homes on St. John. These safe rooms will provide protection for residents during and immediately after disasters, which is in line with the Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan. The total cost for the project is \$1.6 million.



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Page 1 of 3

“Through the collaborative efforts of our local and federal partners, the Territory continues the work of resiliently developing an infrastructure that will stand up to the volatility of climate and economic change,” said [Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Office of Disaster Recovery Director](#). “We are grateful for the funds to manage these projects and rebuild our community from the 2017 hurricanes.”

Coordination continues between FEMA and the Territory to energize a legacy for renewable energy. On St. Croix, the V.I. Water and Power Authority was awarded \$4.5 million for engineering and design for a microgrid project on the western side of the island.

- The microgrid project would include construction of a solar plant and battery energy storage system to provide a renewable source of power for St. Croix to increase reliability of the grid and provide the western part of the island power during extreme weather. The total proposed cost for the project is \$129.7 million.

Work continues with VITEMA, ODR and the V.I. Department of Public Works on mitigation measures for drainage and stabilization for roadways. DPW has been awarded \$1.7 million this spring from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for projects territory wide.

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program projects include:
 - An obligation of \$925,500 for USVI Slope Stabilization Analysis project. To date \$1.6 million has been obligated for this project, which has a total proposed cost \$2.6 million. This project will identify locations throughout the Territory in need of slope stabilization systems. This advance assistance project will allow DPW to stabilize slopes along roads through, which is in line with the goals of the Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan.
 - An obligation of \$555,375 for the Territory Wide Culvert Analysis Advance Assistance Project. To date \$1.1 million has been obligated for this project, which has a total proposed cost \$3.5 million. This project will identify culverts throughout the Territory that need to be upsized to handle large rain events.

FEMA is providing technical and administrative support as well for hazard mitigation measures in the U.S. Virgin Islands. In May, VITEMA was awarded \$5.9 million for management costs related to the Territory's Hazard Mitigation program.



FEMA will continue to work with its territorial partners to reduce risks and hazards to Virgin Islanders posed by hurricanes and other disasters. Hazard mitigation planning for the whole community will build a legacy of resilience for Virgin Islanders.



St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands – FEMA has obligated a total of \$1.6 million through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to the V.I. Department of Public Works for the USVI Slope Stabilization Analysis project. This advance assistance project will identify locations throughout the Territory in need of slope stabilization systems and aligns with the Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan. FEMA photo.

