



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 5, 2017

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, FEDERAL PARTNERS MAKE HEADWAY ON POWER RESTORATION

*Governor Mapp announces U.S. Government's approval of additional funds
to assist with recovery*

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - Support is on the way to help restore power across the Territory, U.S. Virgin Islands Governor Kenneth E. Mapp announced at his Administration's press conference on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters, the Governor explained that the Virgin Islands has received access to approximately \$35 million of a request for \$70 million from the federal government to use for power restoration, road clearing and debris removal.

He explained that towards the end of next week, the Territory will welcome 240 linemen and additional equipment. Thereafter, linemen will arrive in waves of 50 to work in tandem with the team at the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA).

Governor Mapp expressed concern over the steady operation of the wastewater treatment systems in the Territory. He said standby power is being supplied to those facilities thanks to federal partners, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but additional assistance may be required for the sustainable operations of the systems.

The Governor also announced that the school year for the St. Thomas/St. John district will end on July 12, 2018. While schools are planned to reopen in St. Thomas and St. John on Monday, October 9, Governor Mapp was hopeful for a Monday, October 16 start in St. Croix. He said the Government's immediate priority would be senior students.

President of the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) Dr. David Hall announced that the university will resume classes on Monday, October 9, on both campuses. He said immediately after Hurricane Irma, UVI began sharing with students its principle of "holding them harmless" - saving the semester so students' progress toward graduation will not be delayed. "We are going to offer every class that was originally scheduled ... so a student will get what they were promised."

Calling for flexibility and creativity from teachers, Dr. Hall explained the university would make adjustments for the lost time, such as extending class length and potentially offering classes online or on weekends. The semester will be extended until December 22, and exams for this semester will be held during the first week of January next year.

The Points of Distribution (PODs) will be closed over the next several days, and are scheduled to reopen Tuesday, October 10, and Thursday, October 12, as the Territory transitions to the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) and needs are supported by supermarkets.

The Governor announced further shrinking of the curfew: In the St. Thomas/St. John district, the curfew will be in effect from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., while in St. Croix, the curfew has been reduced to 7 p.m. to 9 a.m.

Heartened by his conversation with Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rosselló on Tuesday, Governor Mapp announced there will be a celebration in Christiansted on Monday, October 9, to recognize Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Day. “Because we have both shared Irma and Maria, we do not want this year’s date to go unnoticed,” Governor Mapp said, speaking of the close relationship and shared history between the two territories.

Health Commissioner Dr. Michelle Davis announced that her office is coordinating the planned visit to St. Croix of U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams on Thursday, October 5. The island will be tapping a team of vector control staff from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist with mosquito control. Communicators will also arrive to assist the Department of Health with providing information to the public about eliminating mosquitoes and larvae, and protecting themselves against bites.

Governor Mapp and Mona Barnes, Director of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), welcomed the Danish Emergency Management Agency to the Territory. The Danes spent the day Wednesday working closely with officials at the Department of Education.

Anyone experiencing psychological distress as a result of the hurricanes can call the Disaster Distress Helpline at [1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990) (press 2 for Spanish). The helpline provides free, confidential and multilingual counseling and crisis support. The helpline can also be reached via SMS by texting *talkwithus* (for English) or *hablanos* (for Spanish) to [1-212-461-4635](tel:1-212-461-4635).

Residents can register for disaster assistance by calling 1-800-621-3362 or visiting www.disasterassistance.gov.

The official website to donate to the U.S. Virgin Islands recovery effort is usvirecovery.org.

Other resources for information include:

Government House: informusvi.com

VITEMA: vialert.gov

VITEMA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vitema>

Government House Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GovernmentHouseUSVI/>

The Department of Tourism: www.usviupdate.com

Emergency Operation Centers:

(340) 773-2244 (St. Croix)

(340) 776-2244 (St. John)

(340) 774-2244 (St. Thomas)

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