

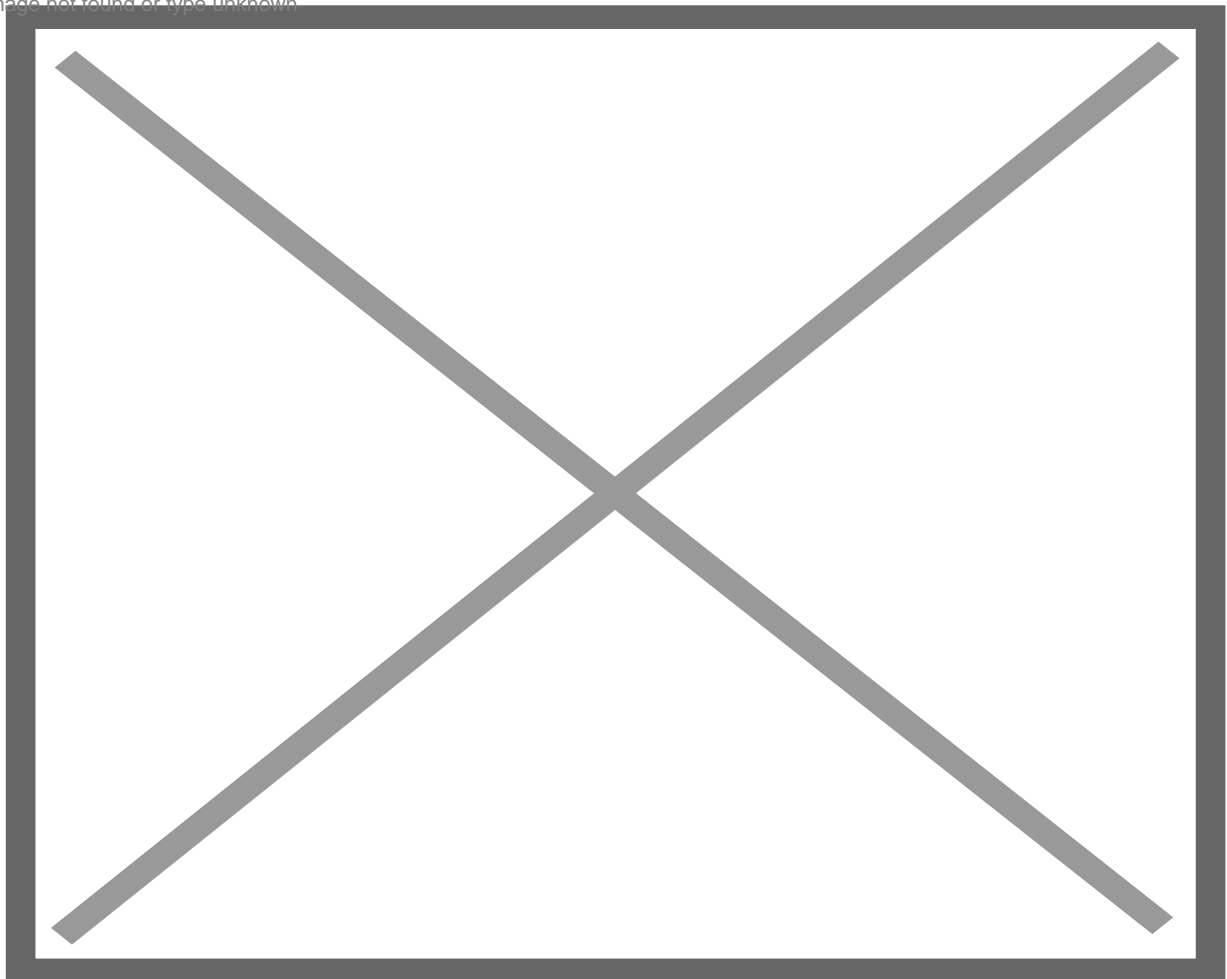
Lead Testing and Water Distribution to Continue Despite Promising New Findings

30-day extension announced as water quality investigations progress

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Distribution of water vouchers will continue in St. Croix despite confirmation that test results showing elevated levels of copper and lead [could be unfounded](#), the Bryan administration said during Monday's press briefing. The local state of emergency — due to expire on November 30th — will also be extended for another 30 days as investigations into the island's water quality continue.

“Our work continues. We are proactively and actively collaborating with FEMA and our other federal partners to refine testing protocols and ensure accurate assessment moving forward,” Governor Bryan said. “The health and safety of our people are our top priorities, and we are committed to ensuring the highest water quality standards are met for all residents.”

That message was delivered by Communications Director Richard Motta, who shared that some 6,100 bottled water vouchers were distributed to affected residents as of Monday. Thousands of homes in St. Croix are still affected by discolored water, prompting a need for continued relief from the local government. Lead testing for children aged 0 to 6 will also continue.

The Department of Health also intends to continue an ongoing survey to assess how residents may be impacted by the current crisis. “We are interested in how public water has been used in homes and to get insights on how the water emergency impacts their physical and mental well-being,” stated Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion, appealing for public cooperation.

Members of the public were also informed that testing of the water distribution system will continue in earnest to ensure accuracy and peace of mind. However, Howell Mark, Environmental Program manager at the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, did not commit to a definite timeline to provide certainty to consumers. “It takes time to collect samples. It takes some time to be able to get all this done. As soon as all of that is done, the information will be provided to the community,” Mr. Mark assured.

Additional support from FEMA arrived in the territory on Monday, with the main priority identified as mapping the sites that have already been tested.