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FEMA Allocates \$989 Million for St. Croix Wastewater System Overhaul

The \$989 million funding from FEMA will overhaul St. Croix's wastewater system, rebuilding crucial infrastructure to ensure resilience and reliability against future natural disasters

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Water treatment facility with large pools of water. By. GETTY IMAGES

The Federal Emergency Management Agency on Friday announced that it has committed \$989 million to enhance the wastewater system on St. Croix, a major step in the ongoing recovery efforts following the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Maria. This funding is part of FEMA's partnership with the Government of the Virgin Islands aimed at strengthening critical infrastructure.

The allocated funds will facilitate a comprehensive overhaul of the majority of St. Croix's wastewater sewer lines and the reconstruction of 14 crucial pump stations. This initiative, enabled by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, underscores FEMA's dedication to working with the territory to renew and fortify facilities and infrastructure devastated by hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017.

Governor Albert Bryan expressed his gratitude and optimism about the project. "Today's substantial financial commitment from FEMA is a clear indication of the faith placed in our collective ability to fortify St. Croix against future natural disasters. We are poised to revamp our wastewater systems, bringing them in line with industry standards, promising resilience and reliability for years to come. We extend our deepest gratitude to FEMA and our federal partners for their unwavering support and shared commitment to the well-being and future prosperity of the Virgin Islands," he stated.

This significant investment will provide the Government of the Virgin Islands with the necessary financial resources to develop infrastructure capable of withstanding future adversities. Kristen Hodge, FEMA U.S. Virgin Islands Recovery Director, shared her enthusiasm for the collaboration, stating, "We are excited to collaborate with the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority to transform St. Croix's wastewater collection, transport, and sewage systems into resilient infrastructure that will reliably serve the community for decades."

Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Director of the Office of Disaster Recovery, echoed this sentiment. "This funding is a milestone in our ongoing journey towards recovery and resilience. It represents a critical step forward in rebuilding stronger and smarter. The enhancements to our wastewater systems are not just about recovery; they're about setting a new standard of preparedness for our island, ensuring that we're better equipped to handle future challenges," she said.

To date, FEMA has allocated a total of \$11.9 billion through its Public Assistance program for emergency and permanent repairs to infrastructure damaged during the 2017 hurricanes. Of this amount, approximately \$1.2 billion is designated for hazard mitigation measures aimed at interrupting the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction.