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Virgin Islands Secures EPA Funding to Enhance Water Infrastructure Resilience Against Natural Disasters

The U.S. Virgin Islands will use the \$400,000 grant from the EPA for data collection and modeling efforts aimed at protecting drinking water infrastructure from droughts, hurricanes, and earthquakes

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced a significant allocation of \$25.5 million in grants under its new Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program, aimed at bolstering drinking water systems in underserved, small, and disadvantaged communities across the United States.

Among the 16 inaugural recipients of this funding is the U.S. Virgin Islands, which will receive \$400,000 to support critical data collection and modeling efforts. These initiatives are designed to protect the territory's drinking water system infrastructure from the threats posed by drought,

hurricanes, and earthquakes.

This program marks the first time the EPA is awarding grants under this specific initiative, and it underscores the agency's commitment to addressing climate-related challenges that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities. The grants are part of the broader efforts under the Biden-Harris Administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

"Across the country, climate stress is often felt as water stress that can burden a community's drinking water infrastructure," said Acting Assistant Administrator Bruno Pigott. "This new grant program, along with historic investments from the Biden-Harris Administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will strengthen our nation's water infrastructure and protect public health."

According to the release, the selected projects are spread across various states and territories, with each aimed at enhancing the resilience and sustainability of drinking water systems in the face of climate change and natural disasters. The grants will support a range of initiatives, from installing emergency generators and updating infrastructure to replacing aging water mains and improving water supply systems.

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, the \$400,000 grant will be specifically used to enhance the territory's ability to withstand and recover from natural hazards such as drought, hurricanes, and earthquakes. The funding will facilitate data collection and modeling efforts that are crucial for the protection and long-term sustainability of the territory's drinking water infrastructure.

Other recipients of the EPA's funding include communities in Alaska, California, Georgia, Missouri, Washington, West Virginia, and several tribal nations. Projects funded by these grants range from the installation of emergency generators in Alaska's Saint Paul Island City to the replacement of failing water pipes in Fresno, California, all aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change and natural disasters on drinking water systems.

The EPA's initiative aligns with Mr. Biden's Justice40 Initiative, which focuses on delivering 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

The EPA anticipates making the awards to the selected recipients once they have satisfied all legal and administrative requirements, ensuring that these critical projects can move forward to protect public health and secure drinking water systems for future generations.