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Bryan Administration Showcases Progress at White House Communities in Action Conference

Bryan administration highlights key federal investments and progress in rebuilding efforts at White House Communities in Action Conference, focusing on infrastructure upgrades, flood mitigation, and transportation improvements.

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Governor Albert Bryan, Jr.

This week, key members of the Bryan administration are attending the White House's Communities in Action Conference to highlight the strides being made in the U.S. Virgin Islands' ongoing recovery and development efforts, Government House made known late Friday.

The conference, part of the Biden administration's Building a Better America Initiative, brings together leaders from across the country to share progress on key infrastructure and disaster recovery projects, Gov't House said.

Representing the Virgin Islands at the event are Department of Planning and Natural Resources Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol, Public Works Commissioner Derek Gabriel, and Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne Williams-Octalien. Their focus is on engaging with federal agencies and leaders from other territories and states, discussing collaborative efforts to ensure the continued rebuilding and transformation of the Virgin Islands.

As the territory continues to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the Bryan administration says it has been working to restore and enhance infrastructure. The partnership between the territory and the Biden administration has played a crucial role in making this progress possible, with significant federal investments being allocated to various sectors in the territory, according to the release.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. expressed deep appreciation for the support. "The Biden-Harris Administration has proven to be a true partner to the Virgin Islands, investing in our recovery and in our future. From modernizing our airports and ferry systems to reducing flood risks in our most vulnerable communities, these are not just projects on paper—they are transformative changes that will benefit every single Virgin Islander."

Mr. Bryan further emphasized the importance of using these federal investments effectively to uplift the community, particularly as the Virgin Islands rebuilds from the severe damage caused by the 2017 hurricanes.

Key Federal Investments in the Virgin Islands

Several transformative federal investments are shaping the future of the Virgin Islands. These projects are intended to improve infrastructure, enhance safety, and boost economic resilience across the territory:

- **Cyril E. King Airport Upgrades:** With an \$8 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration, Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas will undergo significant upgrades, modernizing facilities and improving safety. These changes will support increased air travel and tourism, contributing to the territory's economic recovery.
- **St. Thomas-St. John Ferry System:** The Federal Transit Administration's Ferry Grant Program has provided \$1.7 million to enhance inter-island connectivity by funding the purchase of an additional ferry. This new addition will improve transportation reliability for residents and visitors.
- **Charlotte Amalie Waterfront Revitalization:** A \$25 million commitment from the U.S. Department of Transportation is funding the second phase of the revitalization project, aimed at reducing traffic congestion in downtown Charlotte Amalie. This project will further bolster the capital city's appeal as a top-tier tourist destination.

- Flood Mitigation in Savan Gut: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is investing \$51.7 million in a critical flood mitigation project in the Savan Gut area, protecting homes and businesses from the severe weather events that have previously caused significant damage.

Government House said these investments are part of the Biden administration's broader commitment to helping the U.S. Virgin Islands build a sustainable, resilient, and thriving community. The local government's ongoing collaboration with federal partners is essential to ensuring that these projects are implemented effectively and deliver long-term benefits to the territory's residents, according to the release.

“As we engage with federal partners this week, our focus is on the progress we have made and the bright future we are building for the territory,” said Governor Bryan. “The challenges we have faced are significant, but so is our determination. We are building a Virgin Islands that is stronger, smarter, and more resilient than ever before.”

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