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Governor Bryan Signs Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan into Law

Governor Bryan signed the Virgin Islands Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan into law, ending decades of inaction and establishing a framework for sustainable growth, conservation, and community-driven development in the territory.

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L2R: Bryan Admin. Chief of Staff Kevin Williams Sr., Governor Albert Bryan Jr., and DPNR Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol. By. GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Governor Albert Bryan Jr., joined by Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol, has signed the Virgin Islands Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan (Comp Plan) into law, marking the culmination of a decades-long effort to create a

framework for sustainable growth and conservation in the territory.

According to a release issued Tuesday by the administration, the Comp Plan, signed into law at Government House on St. Croix, fulfills a legislative mandate established 54 years ago under Act 2774, which required the creation of a comprehensive plan to guide the territory's development. Despite multiple legislative efforts over the years, no plan had ever been approved—until now.

“This plan reflects the voice and vision of our people,” Mr. Oriol said, emphasizing the collaborative effort that brought the plan to fruition. He thanked agency representatives, volunteers, and community members for their input, which shaped the framework for growth and preservation in the Virgin Islands.

Governor Bryan called the signing a significant milestone, stating, “This plan goes beyond being a policy document—it realizes decades of effort and reflects our administration's commitment to tackling overdue issues and moving the Virgin Islands forward.”

The creation of the Comp Plan was a deeply collaborative effort, involving extensive community input and bipartisan legislative support, according to DPNR. Beginning in October 2022, DPNR said it coordinated with various agencies to integrate strategies for transportation, agriculture, and housing into the plan.

Over 1,500 Virgin Islanders participated in town halls across the territory, while 92 volunteers contributed through working groups, according to the release. Additionally, more than 700 residents subscribed to updates via planusvi.com to stay informed about the plan's development.

“I applaud the 35th Legislature and their predecessors for their bipartisan support of this monumental step,” Governor Bryan said. He noted that the plan addresses long-standing frustrations with spot zoning, inconsistent permitting, and outdated regulations, offering a modernized approach to land and water use that reflects the aspirations of the Virgin Islands community.

Key Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

- The Comp Plan provides a structured framework to balance growth with conservation, focusing on:
- **Development Guidance:** Establishing clear parameters for new developments.
- **Land and Water Use Balance:** Protecting natural resources while ensuring responsible resource utilization.
- **Conservation Efforts:** Preserving coastlines, historic sites, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Enhancing community services and addressing traffic congestion, overdevelopment, and water quality issues.

The Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan addresses pressing challenges facing the Virgin Islands while creating pathways for sustainable development. Governor Bryan highlighted the plan's significance, stating, “For decades, our territory struggled with the tools needed to balance growth with preservation. This plan reflects our administration's dedication to addressing the complex issues confronting our community and delivering solutions that ensure sustainable development while protecting our natural and cultural heritage.”

While the signing of the Comp Plan is a landmark achievement, Governor Bryan stressed the importance of ongoing implementation and community dialogue. “Our work doesn’t stop here,” he said. “We will implement this plan with ongoing community dialogue to protect our natural resources while creating opportunities for future generations.”

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