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Emergency Repairs Planned Within 30 Days for Addelita Cancryn Pedestrian Bridge

DPW says a preliminary assessment found the Addelita Cancryn pedestrian bridge structurally sound, but renewed concern after falling debris damaged a vehicle has prompted an emergency solicitation, another inspection and repairs within the next 30 days.

Development / **Published On July 14, 2026 07:16 AM /**

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The Cancryn Bridge in St. Thomas, USVI. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The V.I. Department of Public Works plans to conduct emergency repairs within the next 30 days on the deteriorating pedestrian bridge near the Addelita Cancryn School, following renewed public concern and a report that falling material damaged a passing vehicle.

Commissioner Derek Gabriel said Monday that the bridge is believed to remain structurally sound despite its present appearance. DPW will issue an emergency solicitation for another assessment and the removal of deteriorating nonstructural pieces.

During the Government House press briefing, Mr. Gabriel said DPW officials and federal partners inspected the bridge approximately two years ago.

A preliminary structural assessment “deemed that it was safe and sound,” Mr. Gabriel declared.

He said the deteriorating sections identified and removed after that inspection were “really aesthetic pieces or non-structural pieces that were...falling from the bridge,” rather than components essential to the bridge’s structural integrity.

Amid renewed concerns about the structure, Mr. Gabriel said emergency repairs are now scheduled to take place “within the next 30 days.”

DPW will issue an emergency solicitation “just to have someone go up there again, assess and make sure that these structural areas are set in place, which we’re pretty sure of, and then remove those superficial members that are still deteriorating.”

The announcement follows concerns raised last week by Senator Marvin Blyden, who said a portion of the bridge had fallen and damaged a vehicle traveling beneath it.

Mr. Blyden argued that the bridge “no longer appears to serve the public purpose for which it was built,” noting that it has not functioned as a school crossing for more than 20 years.

He said the structure should either be made safe immediately or demolished and removed.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. responded to Mr. Blyden’s communication by suggesting that a legislative appropriation for demolition “solves the problem.”

The governor recommended using money from the St. Thomas Fund to finance the bridge’s removal.

Mr. Blyden’s office said that once DPW submits a corrective plan and the related cost estimates, “that is something that can be looked at.”

DPW must now determine whether the pedestrian bridge will receive further repairs or ultimately be demolished and removed.