

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Meets With Washington Officials To Discuss Funds For Infrastructure, Schools

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Mapp

Governor Kenneth Mapp Monday at Government House on St. Thomas met with Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs Honorable Esther P. Kia'aina and Director of Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior Nikolao I. Pula, Jr., to discuss a range of topics, including funding for St. Croix's Juan Luis Hospital, budget assistance to rebuild the territory's infrastructure, and educational funding to rebuild its schools.

"We discussed the federal government's willingness to provide technical and financial assistance, and about how to better utilize and extend the use of federal funds," said Mapp, who was joined at the meeting by Lt. Gov. Osbert Potter and other senior staff members.

He went on to touch briefly on the many other topics that was discussed.

"Discussion turned to CMS and the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital and our need for \$11 million in capital improvements at the hospital," the governor explained.

"We talked about our strategies with the Delegate to Congress for the largest share of Highway Transportation funds for road construction in the territory.



"We discussed the ABC School program analysis performed by the Army Corps of Engineers, evaluating the physical defects in our schools and the need for four new schools, the demolition and reconstruction of those schools," Mapp said.

The governor also highlighted discussion on the increasing gun violence in the territory.

"Our meeting then turned to Homeland Security, and gaining federal assistance for the human trafficking and gun crimes that are becoming more prevalent throughout the Territory," he said. "We also suggested a collaboration of our local Bureau of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons for technical training and management support."

Kia'aina and Pula will continue meetings this week in the territory, as they travel to St. Croix and St. John. They will meet with the President of the 31st Legislature Sen. Neville James, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, and the National Parks Superintendent Joel Tutien, among others.

Mapp said he was pleased with the outcome of Monday's meeting and has planned further discussions with Kia'aina and Pula in Washington, D.C.

"This was a robust and excellent meeting," Mapp said. "I have agreed to meet with the Assistant Secretary and the director again in three weeks when I am in Washington to continue our discussion."

The Department of the Interior is responsible for coordinating federal policy with respect to the U.S. Virgin Islands, and administering and overseeing the territory's federal assistance, Government House said. The Office of Insular Affairs has as its mission, "to foster economic opportunities, promote government efficiency, and improve the quality of life for the people of the insular areas."

