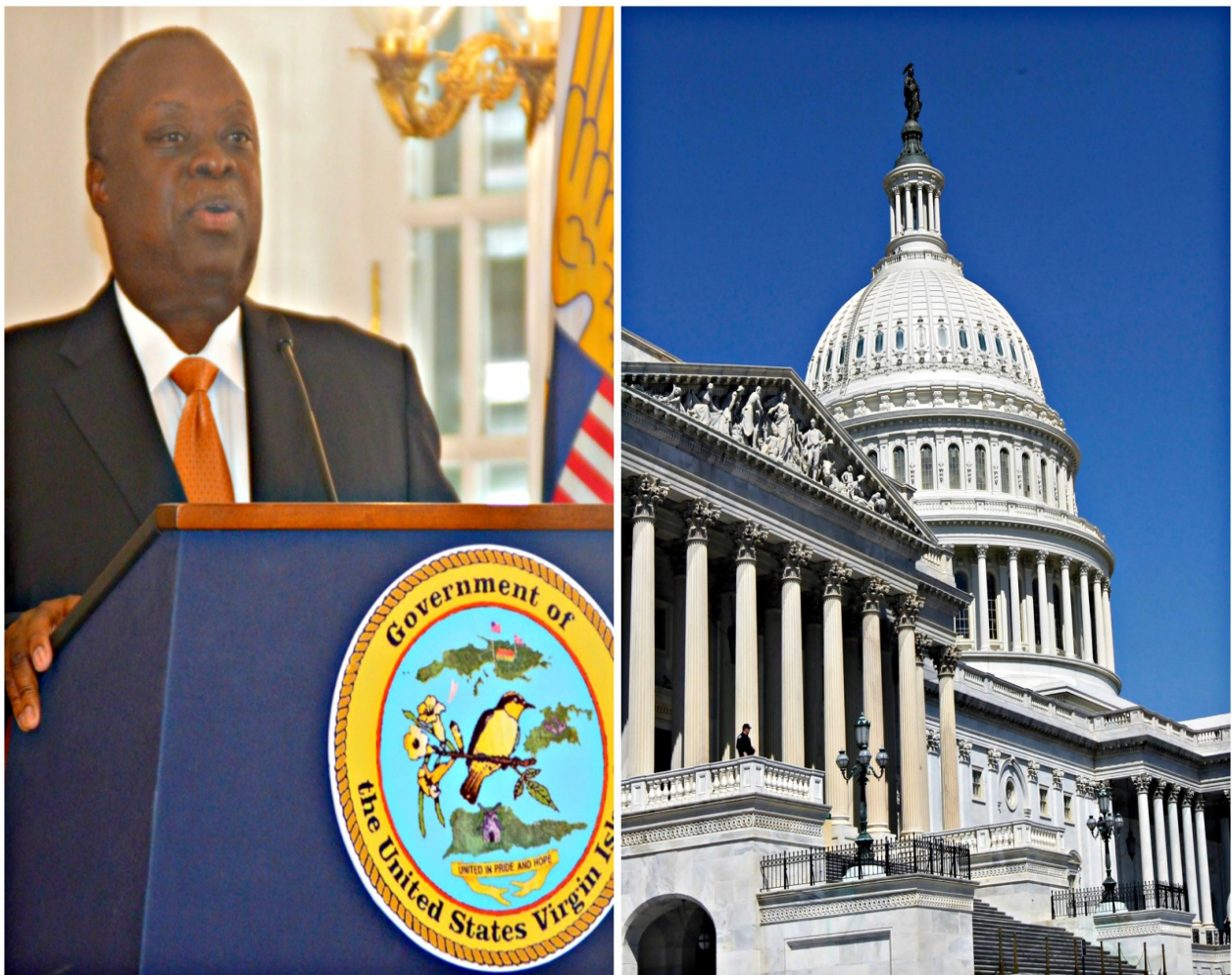


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Sends 20 Letters To Members Of Congress Lobbying For Highway Funding Ahead Of Washington Trip

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp will be traveling to the nation's capital next week to lobby for substantial increases in federal funding to rebuild the territory's highways and roads, Government House announced via press release on Wednesday.

The territory's leader will meet with U.S. Department of Transportation and Department of Interior officials, as well as key lawmakers as Congress works to develop a multi-year surface transportation bill to replace the existing highway program which has been extended by a series of shot-term authorizations over the last several years.

Mapp will be accompanied on his trip by Commissioner of Public Works, Gustav James, who is responsible for building and maintaining the territory's road system, as well as members of his senior staff.

Under the existing federal highway program, Congress allocates \$40 million a year to the territories, of which the Virgin Islands receives approximately \$16 million. Under the proposal developed by governor Mapp, the territory is requesting a five-year program of funding equal to one-half of the allocation made to the state with the smallest allocation under the current program, not less than \$75 million each year for five years.

"Rebuilding the Territory's highway and road infrastructure is key to rebuilding and diversifying our economy" said Mapp. "It is important to the very fabric of our quality of life and a necessary part of our future as we grow our economy and host more visitors to the territory.

"The current conditions of our roads wreak havoc on our emergency vehicles and our public transportation system. This negatively effects the well-being of our residents," he added.

Under the Mapp proposal, territorial governments will use the entire amount of requested new funding for construction of new roadways and related infrastructure improvements in the territory that meet current federal standards, which would represent a significant improvement over existing roadway conditions. Mapp said under this proposal, the Virgin Islands would return to a lesser funding level under the Territorial Highway Program to maintain the new road system once the territory's highway infrastructure has been rebuilt.

Last month, Governor Mapp sent letters to 20 key members of the House and Senate Committees with jurisdiction over the nation's transportation program, including [this one](#) to Sen. Joe Manchin, Democrat of West Virginia, outlining his plan and requesting support.