

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Washington, D.C., Governor Mapp Negotiates On Behalf Of Territory

VIC News / **Published On June 23, 2015 11:54 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp said at a recent press conference that in order to attract new dollars to the territory, he, as chief executive, must venture outside the comforts of Government House and make his way to places where monies are to be had.

Today, the territory's leader was in Washington, D.C., meeting with important people, working the channels, trying to build support for the islands' road-rebuilding efforts.

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



...half of the allocation made to the state with the smallest allocation program, not less than \$75 million each year for five years.

From L2R: Esther P. Kia'aina, Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas

for the U.S. Department of the Interior, Governor Kenneth Mapp, and Dept. of the interior intern from the Virgin Islands Cajay Jacobs.

“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.

Today, the governor met with Esther P. Kia'aina, Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas for the U.S. Department of the Interior and Dept. of Interior's Virgin Islands intern Cajay Jacobs, daughter of Carrol Thomas Jacobs and Terrance Jacobs. She is a graduate of All Saints and currently a senior at Cornell University.

The governor also met with Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett for what the delegate is calling an impromptu meeting during the governor's visit to Capitol Hill today.

“Governor Mapp and I were able to get together today during his visit on Capitol Hill in between my previously scheduled engagements. The Governor came by our office and informed us of his meeting with the chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Rep. Bill Shuster, as well as his endeavor to increase federal highway funding to the territory,” Plaskett said in a press release her office issued on Tuesday afternoon.

Mapp is hoping his efforts will produce positive results and set the course for the full reconstruction of the territory's roads.

“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,” Mapp [recently](#) said.

Under the governor's 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.



Governor Kenneth Mapp and Delegate to

Congress Stacey Plaskett at Plaskett's D.C. office.

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.

Prior to his visit, 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.

From the nation's capital, Mapp heads to New York to [meet with officials of the New York City Police Department](#), hoping to build a relationship that would see local officers being sent to New York for training, and NYPD officers making their way to the territory to support local officers in their crime-fighting and other policing efforts.

Feature Image: Governor Kenneth Mapp in talks with Esther P. Kia'aina, Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas for the U.S. Department of the Interior.