

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Some Wind, Little Rain And Erika Says Goodbye

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ST. CROIX -- The territory was anticipating the worst from Tropical Storm Erika. Here in particular, as up to 12 inches of rain was projected in certain parts of the island, and gusts of nearly 60 miles per hour, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Looking at scenes from Dominica, [ruined by the unpredictable storm](#), did not help, either. And Thursday advisories saw Erika making a southward turn and setting its aim to the territory.

Dominica's plight also sent residents who were not prepared rushing to gather hurricane season necessities, and by the end of Thursday, the roads cleared as islanders hunkered down for bad weather, hoping for lots of rain and little wind.

The opposite happened.

Winds started picking up about 7:30 p.m. in some areas and grew stronger at around 8:00 p.m., holding a steady force for some time, with sporadic showers in-between. In fact, a 62 mph gust was reported by the Green Cay Marina, but little rain came. The most some areas experienced was just over 2 inches according to weather reports, which was immediately soaked up by water-thirsty land affected for months by an ongoing drought. And the most troublesome situation for residents on Thursday night and Friday morning was WAPA.

The semi-autonomous entity left thousands without power well before Erika started brewing, with some areas reporting outages by 6:00 p.m. on Thursday. By midnight, all but one feeder, number 5, remained (it feeds the Juan F. Luis Hospital), leaving residents to rely on their devices for weather updates.

Early Friday morning, Governor Kenneth Mapp had declared a territory-wide [state of emergency](#), which included an all-day curfew, food price freeze and National Guard and peace officers deployment. The chief executive took to radio stations explaining that the islands had been seriously affected by the storm, with downed trees and WAPA poles on various thoroughfares, which Mapp said posed a hazard to residents.

The governor immediately deployed Dept. of Public Works and its contractors to begin the cleanup effort, and by 8:00 a.m. on Friday the curfew was lifted on St. Thomas, followed by an 11:00 a.m. lifting here.

Mapp held the curfew longer on this island because it was the most affected by Erika. St. Croix saw stronger gusts than its sister islands and received most of the little rain that fell. The Consortium took an east to west tour and noticed multiple downed trees that could have easily caused accidents. And WAPA was hit the hardest here, too, with Executive Director Hodge [confirming](#) to this publication that WAPA would complete 80 percent of its work by Friday's end and the remaining 20 percent today.

Even so, residents took to social media to express gratitude that Tropical Storm Erika spared the Virgin Islands its worst weather.

After dropping rain on Puerto Rico and Hispaniola, Erika is struggling [to survive](#) as it continues west.

Feature Image: A broken tree at the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands in St. Croix.