

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Beats Back Amendment Threatening Highway Funding To USVI

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ST. CROIX -- The office of Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett was able to defeat an amendment on the House Floor that threatened to reduce funding available to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam under the Territorial Highway Program, a press release the congresswoman's office issued this afternoon has made known. Above, a screengrab of Mrs. Plaskett addressing the failed amendment.

The highway funding measure, which the local government [plans on using to reconstruct](#) at least some of the territory's roads, has already suffered a major setback when Congress, led by Republicans, [rejected Governor Kenneth Mapp's proposal](#) that would see Congress increasing highway funding to the U.S. territories from \$40 million to \$75 million -- which would see the USVI receiving \$40 million of the total -- hence allowing it

to borrow \$250 million backed by the new annual amount.

According to the release, the Radewagen-Sablan amendment to the DRIVE Act, proposed to change the current formula for funding under the Territorial Highway Program, requiring the Secretary of Transportation to allocate program funds to the territories according to quantifiable measures unique to each of the territories.

"Had this amendment been successful it would have potentially hurt the US Virgin Islands and Guam by taking already minimal funds away from these two territories under the Territorial High Program," Mrs. Plaskett said. "My office was able to galvanize support from Members on both sides of the aisle to defeat this last minute Amendment."

She added: "The funding provided in the transportation bill is yet another example of this Congress' inability to address the real needs of all the U.S. territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands, whose economies have not recovered and require additional support. While I certainly recognize and empathize with the frustrations of some of my colleagues from the territories, I believe it is a larger example of how—in the circumstances—the limited funding within this bill has created an environment where we are literally fighting over scraps.

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"The proposed funding in the bill barely provides any increase to the historically low allocation for the Territorial Highway Program. It is my sincerest hope that the Delegates representing the U.S. Territories can work together to obtain reasonable funding and not pit one territory against the other," Mrs. Plaskett concluded.