

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Vows To Push For Territory's Inclusion In Congress-Sponsored Puerto Rico Financial Relief Package

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ST. CROIX -- Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, through a press release issued on Friday, said she would work tirelessly to see financial relief for the territory be part of any economic recovery package that Congress provides to Puerto Rico.

According to Mrs. Plaskett, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has committed to take action on the measure in March of 2016. She said her staff has already spoken to House leadership on the importance of the territory's inclusion in the pending relief package.

"I am working aggressively to ensure that the U.S. Virgin Islands is included in any economic relief package to Puerto Rico. This week my office has spoken with all of the House Leadership to ensure that the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and other small territories are not excluded from any legislation that might be considered. I will not be silent and allow Congress to move forward with a legislative package that provides significant relief for our sister island in the Caribbean, and potentially excludes the Virgin Islands and other small territories. We are grateful for the support of the governor's office in working toward that end," Mrs. Plaskett said.

The press release was issued following Congress' approval of a \$1.8 trillion spending bill that keeps the government afloat through September, 2016. Mrs. Plaskett says while the bill falls short of adequately addressing issues affecting the islands, "it does make needed investments in some critical areas around the nation, like education, renewable energy, and health care," she said.

The congresswoman praised the measure's continued support for the rum industry here through an extension of the rum cover-over tax funds.

"During this past year my office has been working to extend the tax permanently and we continue to have meaningful discussion with House and Senate Leadership to move for permanency for the rum cover-over," she said. "Congress' support for a temporary extension today will allow the U.S. Virgin Islands to invest millions into critical infrastructure and other improvement projects."