

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp To Sign Emergency Order To Expedite Repairs Of Territory's Roads Damaged By Rainfall

Government / **Published On December 12, 2016 10:12 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- Following weeks of rainfall in the territory, which Governor Kenneth Mapp at a press conference at Government House here this morning blamed for damaging "primary and secondary" roads, the governor said today that by Wednesday, he would sign what is called a public exigency document to expedite road repairs territory-wide.

Mr. Mapp had ordered his island administrators to join with the Department of Public Works in performing an assessment of damaged roads, and revealed today that the effort had produced a good idea of roads territory-wide in need of repairs. The funds for the repairs will be taken from a mix of local monies currently available to be spent specifically on road projects, as well as federal dollars through the [Federal Highway Grant](#)

[Anticipation Bond financing](#), commonly referred to as GARVEE Bonds.

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The governor said four top civil engineering companies that work with the Federal Highway Administration and Department of Public Works had been hired to help advance the cause "in preparing necessary design and specification documents for the construction of roads."

"This is important because we've made a decision that instead of sending patching trucks out to fill the potholes like we've normally done, only to be damaged again by weather, we're going to work with our local contracting paving companies, and we're going to actually remove sections of the road where they are bad and rebuild them," Mr. Mapp said.

The public exigency document will last for 90 days, Mr. Mapp said. The idea is to give D.P.W. and the Department of Property and Procurement the tools necessary to fast track the processes for the implementation of road repair contracts.

"Over the coming weeks you should be able to see in the territory a rolled out and stepped up effort on the repair and reconstruction of a number of roads," Mr. Mapp said. "The public exigency will also permit the Department of Public Works, where they're prepared, to get one or two of their major road projects launched under that umbrella as well."

To further aid the action, Attorney General Claude Walker will assign a contract specialist from the Department of Justice to D.P.P. to assist them through the exigency process, which will help prevent missteps, the governor said. Mr. Mapp then made mention of past exigency processes that led to the arrest and subsequent jailing of individuals. "We don't want a repeat of that," he said.

The governor said his administration will perform the road repairs in tandem with the federal highway system, adding that the system requires notification of change in use of proceeds to ensure that said changes are within the standards of building and constructing roads, and that available funds are used in accordance with the purpose for which they were given.

The governor said he would remain "personally involved" in the exigency process, to ensure that D.P.W. and D.P.P. are getting their jobs done.