

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Meets With Dept. Of Interior Officials As VI Government Receives Over \$700,000 In Grants

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On Tuesday, Interior Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Nikolao Pula and other officials met with Governor Kenneth Mapp to discuss issues facing the territory, the Department of Interior announced Wednesday. They discussed infrastructure challenges related to the hospitals and various initiatives that Mr. Mapp has implemented and is developing to bring greater fiscal stability to the Virgin Islands.

The governor's trip coincided with the release of \$704,000 in technical and maintenance assistance funding from the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) which will support the governor and his administration in several important ways. Funds will be used to explore potential manufacturing and production in food and agricultural products and to save costs and

improve the provision of public services in water distribution and maintenance and correctional safety.

“The governor and I were able to have frank discussions on his priorities for the U.S. Virgin Islands,” said Acting Assistant Secretary Pula. “I am pleased OIA is able to provide some assistance to worthy projects that will directly impact and enhance the government's ability to deliver services and opportunities.”

The projects funded from FY2017 OIA Technical and Maintenance Assistance Funds are as follow:

Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority - \$250,000 to fund a study analyzing the feasibility of processing and packing local fruits and other agricultural plants to increase food resiliency and food security and how favorite local foods and plants can be produced for local consumption, gifts and export. This year, St. Croix held its 46th annual Agriculture and Food Fair themed “Agriculture: Our Heritage and Hope for the Future!” and was the largest agricultural exposition in the territory and possibly the largest in the Caribbean. The grant will be used to help explore whether an existing cottage industry can be expanded to larger scale manufacturing and provide a much-needed economic boost to the territory. This is a first-time funded project.

USVI Bureau of Corrections - \$100,000 to provide help the USVI meet requirements under a U.S. District Court mandated settlement agreements requiring the USVI to maintain the health and safety of the population under its control, to include comprehensive preventive maintenance for sanitation and environmental health and fire and life safety. Funds are also provided to training and materials and supplies necessary for efficient functioning of the prison system and meeting basic requirements under the law. Three facilities in the territory hold 600 inmates. Prior year shortcomings have prompted transfer of over 250 inmates to off-island facilities further distancing family members and costing approximately \$7.6 million. This is a first-time funded project.

Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) –