

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Interior Awards Territory \$2.4 Million Grant For Infrastructure Improvements On Schools

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The U.S. Department of Interior has awarded the territory a \$2.4 million grant for infrastructure improvements on Virgin Islands schools. The grants have been made available through the Office of Insular Affairs' (OIA) Capital Improvement Project (CIP) program.

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, a member of the House Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, announced the award on Friday.

"Today I am pleased to announce the U.S. Virgin Islands will receive two important grants from the Department of Interior today. The first Grant the Insular Assessment of Buildings and Classrooms (ABCs) Initiative (FY 2017) is worth \$1,947,000 and will be used to address high-priority health and safety deferred maintenance needs across the territory as identified through the Insular ABCs assessment. The repairs will include the installation or replacement of fire alarm systems, upgrades to fire protection and plumbing infrastructure, upgrades to Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems, and priority structural repairs," Ms. Plaskett said.

"The next Grant, the St. Croix Schools' Potable Water Infrastructure Replacement Project is worth \$500,000 and will be used to begin replacement of the aging and collapsing portions of the potable water infrastructure at schools on St. Croix to prevent water loss and ensure a supply of clean and safe water. The VIDE has estimated the aging potable water infrastructure to be more than 40 years old and intends to begin work at the schools with the worst leakage. There are an estimated 344 public school buildings across 34 public schools in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The total deferred maintenance needs and issues identified by the ABCs assessment for public schools across the territory have been estimated at approximately \$70 million," she added.

The timing of these grants comes during a period when both the Virgin Islands schools and the territory's local economy are facing many challenges, the delegate to Congress said. "These two important Grants will not only facilitate our infrastructure improvement efforts, but they will also provide much needed jobs, concluded Congresswoman Plaskett."