

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Announces Change In Curfew Hours, Chastises VI Residents Not Pleased With Speed Of Recovery

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp on Wednesday evening addressed the community on the government's post Hurricane Irma efforts so far. Mr. Mapp started his talk by recognizing the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (W.A.P.A.) lineman, identified by the governor as Jason Julius, who died after being electrocuted on Tuesday. The governor expressed condolences to the victim's family.

Pivoting on the death of the lineman, who was working to restore power in the Sugar Estate area, Mr. Mapp was clearly perturbed while addressing some in the community who he said were being unrealistic in their expectations relative to the speed of the recovery process. The governor suggested that they leave the territory for a few months

for the mainland, where they would be able to enjoy the amenities they desire.

"You have to stop expecting that recovery is going to come in a matter of days, that your inconvenience is being done because someone wants to inconvenience you. This was a category 5 event; today makes day 7. And if you have any belief your lives are going to be made whole in a week, two weeks or a month, you're living in La La Land," the governor said. "And if you're not prepared to go through these challenges in a realistic way, with realistic expectations, I am strongly urging you to take one of the flights or one of the mercy cruises, and go to the mainland for a few months and come back."

The governor announced a change in the curfew hours, which gives residents in the St. Thomas-St. John District more time to conduct their matters. The new curfew starts at 6:00 p.m. and ends at 10:00 a.m. Previously, the curfew hours were 6:00 p.m. to 12 noon., with four gas stations in the district being allowed two additional hours -- until 8:00 p.m. -- to supply fuel to first responders.

The governor said at least two major U.S. airlines (American and Delta) along with some of the other carriers, were set to land in St. Thomas on Saturday, pending one more clearance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, relative to making space on the airport's runway.

And Mr. Mapp addressed the distribution of food, chastising those who work at the distribution centers for rationing the supplies in a way in which, he said, was not practical. "Folks in the community was saying to me that when you go to the distribution line, you get one meal and one water. And I'm listening to folks telling me that, and I'm understanding in my mind that they're getting a case of MREs, which are fourteen meals, and they're getting a case of water, which is twelve liters of water.

"To my chagrin, I learned that the workers at the distribution centers were actually opening the cases of MREs, and giving people two meals and one liter of water. That defies logic," Mr. Mapp said.

The food distribution centers on St. Thomas are located at the Fire Station across from the Barbel Plaza, the Tutu Fire Station, and Kirwan Terrace. Mr. Mapp said he advised the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency Director, Mona Barnes, to install two additional distribution centers in St. Thomas. On St. John, the distribution centers are located at Winston Wells Ballpark in Cruz Bay, and the Fire Station near the Guy Benjamin Elementary School in Coral Bay. The governor said a plan was being worked on that would fast-track the process for seniors who visit the distribution centers.

He confirmed that former mayor Michael Bloomberg and Tim Duncan will arrive in the territory tomorrow morning, and that he plans on meeting with them at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Mapp said Mr. Bloomberg has been extremely supportive of his administration and the territory's recovery efforts, and has brought together a group of professionals who aided Mr. Bloomberg with recovery following Hurricane Sandy's landfall in New York in 2012, to help the USVI with, among other things, efficiency. Hurricane Sandy caused an estimated \$32 billion in damage in New York.

According to the governor, Mr. Duncan had raised between five and six million dollars to go exclusively towards the relief effort in the territory. "He's been working really, really

hard and I just want to express my thanks to him and his team for all that they're doing for his homeland," the governor said.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who Mr. Mapp has a good relationship with, has pledged 27 state troopers to be deployed in the St. Thomas-St. John District on Saturday, to aid with security. The governor said three state troopers will arrive in the USVI tomorrow, to perform an assessment of the situation, which will help Mr. Cuomo's team determine whether more troopers will be needed.

More police officers were deployed to St. John (minimum of 6), for continued security. "Some of our concerns is what's been going on in the BVI," Mr. Mapp said, referring to prisoners who escaped the British Virgin Islands correctional facility after it was breached by Hurricane Irma. "There are areas in the BVI where there's ready access to the USVI, and we want to make sure that our citizens there are fully protected," Mr. Mapp said.

As for the reports of rampant lawlessness on St. John, two FBI agents sent to investigate the rumor have found, through investigation, that talk of such behavior was most likely embellished. After multiple interviews, not a single individual could confirm to the FBI agents that they'd either seen, know of, or were victims of a crime following Hurricane Irma, according to William Vogel, federal coordinating officer of FEMA Region II. FEMA has also been working with WAPA to install a generator on St. John to provide power to the island.

The governor wrote to F.E.M.A. today, asking that St. Croix be included in the personal assistance portion of the disaster relief program. "We've been doing an assessment, and we found -- not only from the power outages -- [that] a number of folks have suffered severe leaks in their homes, they've got wet stuff; seniors have issues in terms of medicine," Mr. Mapp said. He also mentioned taxi drivers, craftsmen and "folks in the private sector who have been unable to work and lost a number of hours, as some of the locations where they work have not been able to open and get into full operations."

Communications company Viya has installed three communication hubs in St. Thomas, located at Tutu Park, Havensight and the Emile Griffith Park. The password for access is ViyaFi_FREE_ACCESS. The Virgin Islands Next Generation Network installed WiFi access in the Red Hook area near the temporary Port Authority parking lot, adjacent to the Eudora Kean Gymnasium. To get online, sign on to the Wi-Fi network named "ADM-viNGN-free". No password is required.

Finally, The Consortium asked the governor about the territory's preparation for the arrival of President Donald Trump. However, Mr. Mapp said such plans would not be released to the public for security purposes, although this reporter was not referring to the logistics of the visit, but rather the local government's itinerary for the trip, if one existed.

Feature Image: Downed lines and trees in St. Thomas. (Credit: [Darryl Potter](#))