

The Virgin Islands Consortium

EPA Personnel Stationed In Atlanta Being Deployed To USVI, Puerto Rico In Response To Hurricane Maria

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WASHINGTON -- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) response personnel staged in Atlanta were on Thursday preparing to deploy to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in response to Hurricane Maria, E.P.A. announced Thursday.

An EPA On-Scene Coordinator is currently in St. Croix reporting island conditions and coordinating with federal partners on assessments and cleanup.

Based on initial reports, the situation on the ground in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands is devastating. High winds and flooding have knocked out power across the island and caused extensive damage.

“Our hearts are with the citizens of Puerto Rico, including EPA staff in Region 2’s Caribbean Environmental Protection Division,” said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

EPA is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its assistance to the governments of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. EPA is focused on environmental impacts and potential threats to people’s health caused by Hurricane Maria, as well as the safety of those in the affected areas.

The following plans are in place:

- EPA is sending an initial crew of emergency responders to the U.S. Virgin Islands tomorrow, or as soon as air transport to the U.S. Virgin Islands is available. Among their first priorities will be assessing drinking water infrastructure. More EPA emergency responders will be deployed in the following days to assess conditions of regulated facilities, assess and clean up hazardous debris, and assist FEMA in the overall recovery as needed.
- EPA is sending crews to Puerto Rico as soon as air transport to Puerto Rico is available. Among their first priorities will be assessing facilities where there are known hazardous substances to ensure the safety of the people nearby those facilities. EPA will send additional crews of emergency responders to Puerto Rico to address problems identified in the initial assessments.

EPA has important resources available online in English and Spanish about floodwaters, hazardous debris, household hazardous waste, and other hurricane impacts. EPA will continue to provide regular updates about EPA’s response to Hurricane Maria. For information and updates, visit: www.epa.gov/hurricane-maria.