

The Virgin Islands Consortium

With Two Shipping Containers Of USVI Mail Stuck In Puerto Rico, Postal Service Will Ship Mail Directly To Territory From Mainland

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The U.S. Postal Service will start shipping mail to the territory directly from the U.S. mainland instead of the regular Puerto Rico route, following lobbying from local leaders as thousands of mail headed to the territory have been stuck in Puerto Rico.

"We have contacted the White House, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the USPS to identify short and long-term solutions," said Governor Kenneth Mapp in a release issued Thursday. Mr. Mapp explained that at least two shipping containers of mail have been delayed in Puerto Rico.

He said delays with passport processing were also impacted by the situation in San Juan and were being addressed through the U.S. State Department.

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett on Tuesday said she was told by Deputy Postmaster Ronald A. Stroman, that an additional 200 Postal Service workers had arrived in Puerto Rico to speed up the process of delivery to the USVI. Mail headed to the territory will be routed to Miami instead of Puerto Rico, with the Postal Service using a commercial airline to deliver the mail, according to Ms. Plaskett.

Some residents have expressed frustration with the long delays in mail since Hurricane Maria affected Puerto Rico, which has directly impacted mail delivery to the territory.

Local Postal Service employees have been working abbreviated workweeks following the passage of the storms, with Irma destroying at least one post office in St. Thomas, and Maria ravaging the Frederiksted Post Office on St. Croix. Other post offices were affected as well, but Postal Service officials, recognizing USPS's important role, have worked through kinks to provide service.

The regular mailing route through Puerto Rico is expected to resume once the backlog of mail is resolved and delivery issues addressed.