

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Culture Entities Urged To Apply For Federal Assistance In Wake Of Hurricanes Irma And Maria

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ST. THOMAS -- Senate President Myron Jackson, above, on Monday urged cultural agencies and organizations to apply for public assistance in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, particularly now that the original deadline of November 20 is pushed to next January.

The new deadline, January 4, 2018, comes on the heels of Mr. Jackson's request to Governor Kenneth Mapp to allow more time for public and private entities to assess disaster-related damages to cultural resources of the Virgin Islands, Mr. Jackson's office said.

The Senate president facilitated a meeting with a cross section of government and non-profit stakeholders on Thursday, for agency leaders to interface with federal representatives on the process of receiving assistance, Mr. Jackson's office said.

Some of the challenges ranged from structural damage to historic buildings in our historic towns; archives infested with mold and fungus; water logged collections and library materials; preservation of fallen trees; and destruction of cultural venues. They reported being largely unaware of the Nov. 20 deadline and requested more time to submit their applications.

“Protecting our cultural resources is important to the development of our rebuilding and future growth, and we want to avail ourselves of the opportunity to get the assistance afforded to all states and territories under the United States flag,” Mr. Jackson said. “I would like to thank Governor Mapp for intervening on behalf of our significant cultural organizations that need additional time to initiate and complete the process.”

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) representatives said they act based on the priorities and needs for the territory’s recovery outlined by the executive branch.

Those attending the meeting included the FEMA representatives; the United States Army Corps of Engineers; the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Agency; the Economic Development Authority-Enterprise Zone Commission; the Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas; Magens Bay Authority; the Historic Preservation Committee; the St. John Legislature; Reichhold Center for the Arts; University of the Virgin Islands; Department of Planning & Natural Resources; Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office; Virgin Islands Council on the Arts; the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture; and representatives from the 32nd Legislature’s Committee on Consumer Affairs, Workforce Development, and Culture.