

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Appointed To Powerful Transportation And Infrastructure Committee

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett has been appointed to the U.S. Congress's powerful House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

“I am pleased to announce that my Democratic colleagues have selected me for a seat on the powerful House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This Committee has always been my ultimate goal and first choice and I am humbled that my colleagues chose this important time to place me on the Committee as a seat became vacant. I have

been consistent with this request recognizing that the future of economic development of the Virgin Islands – along with the broader Caribbean region – will continue to depend on a strong port and shipping sector and increased opportunities for infrastructure development. There has not been a member from the territories on this committee for over 20 years," Ms. Plaskett said.

Nanci Pelosi, the Democratic leader of the House of Representatives, lauded the delegate, describing her appointment on the committee following the storms as essential to decisions being made relative to rebuilding damaged infrastructure.

"Congresswoman Plaskett is a tireless champion for the Virgin Islands and for all Americans," Ms. Pelosi said. "Her courage and fierce voice following the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria will be an essential addition to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as they continue their important work. Stacey understands the critical need to rebuild, expand and modernize our nation's vital infrastructure everywhere in America and in all U.S. territories. She will be a strong, energetic leader in Democrats' fight to secure needed investments that grow our economy and support every American across the country."

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee currently has jurisdiction over all modes of transportation: aviation, maritime and waterborne transportation, roads, bridges, mass transit, and railroads. But the Committee has jurisdiction over other aspects of national and territorial infrastructure, such as clean water and waste water management, the transport of resources by pipeline, flood damage reduction, the economic development of depressed rural and urban areas, disaster preparedness and response, activities of the Army Corps of Engineers and the various missions of the Coast Guard.

It also has jurisdiction over the Stafford Act, the American law designated to disaster response. Ms. Plaskett said she intends to lead changes to the Act that would provide more assistance to the USVI.

"I would like to tackle this outdated Act which is the federal law designed to bring an orderly and systemic means of federal natural disaster assistance for state and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to aid citizens. I look forward to working with Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio and other Members on updating this law and making the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean whole again," she said.

Below, the remainder of Ms. Plaskett's statement:

"The Virgin Islands has been completely devastated and my membership on this committee can only help our progress in the future. The ability to sit on this powerful committee with jurisdiction over our national infrastructure and disaster preparedness and response will provide me more substantive interactions with agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and an opportunity to impact their respective policies and procedures.

"I am pleased to welcome Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Throughout her career, Congresswoman Plaskett has fought hard for the Virgin Islands. In the wake of the devastating 2017 hurricane season she has pushed for a more robust recovery response and fought to hold the Federal

government accountable for its hurricane recovery efforts. Her experience will help this Committee build smarter, stronger, and more resilient communities throughout the country,” said Ranking Member Pete DeFazio. “Congresswoman Plaskett is an incredible addition to the Committee, and her voice will be essential as Democrats continue to push for critical investments that will create millions of jobs and rebuild and replace our crumbling network of highways, bridges, railways, airports, and water infrastructure.”

“My membership on this committee will play a vital role in the future rebuilding and both the physical and economic resilience of the Virgin Islands, and others similarly situated. With the ever increasing effects of climate change and an aging and underdeveloped infrastructure in the Caribbean region, the Virgin Islands are deserving of a voice on the Committee to speak to our unique issues. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this committee for the betterment of the Virgin Islands and the United States of America.”

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