

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Here's A Breakdown Of How Much The USVI Stands To Receive From The \$89 Billion Disaster Aid Package

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Included in a U.S. government spending bill that was signed into law by President Trump this morning, was \$89.3 billion in disaster aid for U.S. states and territories affected by natural disasters in 2017 -- wildfires, hurricanes and flooding.

Of the \$89.3 billion, several billion dollars in funding have been allocated to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Here's a breakdown of the dollars, per Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, whose efforts helped in securing the funds.

- \$150 million in FEMA Disaster Relief loans to assist the Virgin Islands with local cost shares.

- Critical FEMA provisions which waive requirements to rebuild critical infrastructure based on pre-disaster condition so that the Virgin Islands can rebuild stronger and more resilient.
- Provisions doubling the time period that hurricane-related revenue losses are considered for Community Disaster Loans to the Virgin Islands, which should increase the size of the loans.
- Presidential discretion to raise federal cost sharing for certain disaster assistance to 85% if recipients take steps to make themselves more resilient against disasters.
- \$11 billion in Housing and Urban Development (CDBG) loans reserved for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, of which \$2 billion shall be used to improve electric systems.
- All Army Corps of Engineers projects in the Virgin Islands using such funds will be conducted at full federal expense.
- \$3.6 billion for Agriculture Department disaster-related activities, including \$2.36 billion for crops, trees, bushes, vines, and livestock losses from 2017 hurricanes. Under this program, payments may not exceed 65% of the loss for producers who have not obtained Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) policies, or 85% for those that did. In order to be eligible for payments, all producers must purchase NAP for the next two years.
- \$400 million is for the Farm Service Agency to provide emergency conservation efforts to mitigate future disaster risk. \$541 million for USDA watershed and flood prevention activities.
- \$14 million is for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) for grants to the Virgin Islands (and Puerto Rico) to assist in repairing damage to WIC facilities from hurricanes.
- \$2.79 billion to help restart schools in disaster affected areas (such as the Virgin Islands) and provide assistance to displaced students.
- \$105 million for Customs and Border Protection activities, including \$39 million specifically for customs and border enforcement activities in the Virgin Islands (and Puerto Rico).
- Compensation is also provided for reduced collections for the U.S. Virgin Islands Deposit Fund due to port damage and a decline in trade resulting from hurricanes.
- \$1.8 billion, including \$1.4 billion to repair federal highways, and \$115 million for FAA operations to repair and rebuild airport infrastructure.
- This funding also includes an important waiver of the \$20 million cap on federal highway aid emergency relief to U.S. territories.
- Authorization for HUD to adjust Section 8 voucher funding for public housing authorities.
- \$257 million to the Department of Interior for National Park Service construction and historic preservation grants.
- \$3 million for the Office of Insular Affairs to provide technical assistance to the Virgin Islands.
- \$63.2 million, including a provision granting the Virgin Islands (and Puerto Rico) access to previously appropriated State Revolving Fund money in Environmental Protection in order to help rebuild clean water and drinking water systems more resilient than before the storms.
- \$130.9 million to the Labor Department, including provisions deferring Virgin Islands unemployment insurance interest payments by one year.

- The bill also provides flexibility for the Virgin Islands to transfer 2016 and 2017 Youth Workforce Investment program funds among the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker training categories.

"While the funding does not include the full amount or all of requests of the Virgin Islands it will help us substantially in the rebuilding efforts," said Ms. Plaskett. "We worked very hard to see that the Virgin Islands be provided with additional Medicaid funding for the territory's urgent health needs. The islands are provided with \$142 million in additional funds through September 2019, with a 100% federal match for these new funds."

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