

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp On 2018 Hurricane Preparedness: 'We're Going To Do The Best We Can'

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ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp, in responding to a Consortium reporter's query about his administration's preparedness for the upcoming 2018 hurricane season, predicted to be [an above average year](#) by the Colorado State University, responded by stating that outside of standard operation preparations -- mobilizing of equipment, bidding for debris clearing and removal contracts, contracts for linemen -- the rest was out of his control.

"This isn't easy, I'm in the center of it," the governor said during his Friday press conference to address matters related to the Department of Education. "And they say be careful what you ask the good Lord for because you might get it, and I asked for it, and

my god I got it. But I don't know when you say prepare for the storm, what that means; I'm just being candid."

Mr. Mapp spoke of an article he read that spoke of debris still in the territory that may be here during the 2018 hurricane season. He said there's only so much that can be done in one year -- especially after being struck by two Category 5 hurricanes -- and he recalled Hurricanes Hugo and Marilyn, stating that debris removal was still occurring one year later. "You can't get it all done by a schedule," he said. "It's just an arduous, difficult process, and what we need to do and what we will do is mitigate for it. So to the extent that if we are told that a storm is coming and the storm has a strength, we're going to mitigate in terms of where loose, flying debris can be, and how people ought to protect themselves, but we are not going to get it all up, even if we had burned 35 percent of it."

The governor spoke of more debris from the Emergency Home Repairs VI Project, a \$766 million undertaking that sees the federal government providing funding on average of \$25,000, to homeowners in the territory whose properties were damaged by the storms.

"I know that there are things that we have to do that we're going to do to make sure that we're ready, but it's nature and I am praying and I'm asking all good Christians who pray and all persons of faith, to pray that we get spared this year, because we have enough storms for another ten years. But if one comes, we're going to do the best that we can to make sure that the people of the territory are protected, and leave the rest because it's above our pay grade," Mr. Mapp said.

The 2018 Hurricane Season will be slightly above average, according to the [Colorado State University Tropical Meteorology Project](#), which has been relied on for decades with its predictions. In its first forecast of 2017, C.S.U. had predicted a slightly below average hurricane season with 11 named storms, but [by July of 2017 C.S.U. updated its prediction](#) with 15 named storms and eight hurricanes, three of which it said would have been major.

This year, C.S.U. in its first prediction said it's expecting 14 named storms and 7 hurricanes, three of which are expected to be major.

According to C.S.U., the current weak La Niña event — a cooling of the water in the equatorial Pacific that occurs at irregular intervals and is associated with widespread changes in weather patterns — appears likely to transition to neutral ENSO over the next several months. ENSO, or El Niño Southern Oscillation, is an atmosphere phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean that has widespread meteorological and ecological impacts on Earth's surface.

"But at this point, we do not anticipate a significant El Niño event this summer/fall," C.S.U. said. "The western tropical Atlantic is anomalously warm right now, while portions of the eastern tropical Atlantic and far North Atlantic are anomalously cool. Consequently, our Atlantic Multi-decadal Oscillation index is near its long-term average. We anticipate a slightly above-average probability for major hurricanes making landfall along the continental United States coastline and in the Caribbean. As is the case with all hurricane seasons, coastal residents are reminded that it only takes one hurricane making landfall to make it an active season for them. They should prepare the same for every season,

regardless of how much activity is predicted.”

The probability for at least one of the three predicted major hurricanes making landfall in the Caribbean is 52 percent, C.S.U. said. The average for the last century has been 42 percent.

On the U.S. mainland the probability for at least one of the three predicted major storms making landfall is 63 percent. On the East Coast including the Florida peninsular, the percentage drops to 39 percent, although the average for the last century has been 31 percent. For the Gulf Coast including the Florida Panhandle, this year’s probability is 38 percent. The average of the last century has been 30 percent, according to C.S.U.

Other data provided by C.S.U.

- 70 Named Storm Days
- 30 Hurricane Days
- 7 Major Hurricane Days

C.S.U. said this first forecast is based on an extended-range early April statistical prediction scheme that was developed using 29 years of past data. “The early April forecast is the earliest seasonal forecast issued by Colorado State University and has modest long-term skill when evaluated in hindcast mode. The skill of CSU’s forecast updates increases as the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season approaches,” C.S.U. said.