

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Lifts Jobs And Wage Freeze In USVI; State Of Emergency Extended To July 2

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Governor Kenneth E. Mapp, with immediate effect, has lifted the freeze on non-essential hiring in the executive branch of the Government of the Virgin Islands (G.V.I.), Government House has announced. As the U.S. Virgin Islands recovers from last year's hurricanes, the job and wage thaw creates numerous opportunities to attract and retain necessary staff to assist in the territory's recovery, according to the administration.

Yesterday's order was executed in conjunction with the on-schedule submission of the FY 2019 Budget on Wednesday evening. The proposed budget called for the use of increased revenues from the billions of dollars in federal disaster and mitigation aid to improve employee salaries throughout the G.V.I. The order allows the chief labor

negotiator of the Office of Collective Bargaining to enter into wage negotiations on behalf of executive branch departments and agencies but not to exceed 3 percent per annually without the governor's written consent, Government House said.

The freezing of all non-essential hiring and suspension of wage negotiations was originally mandated by executive order No. 481-2017 [in February 2017](#) to manage the use of the territory's funds limited funds. It did not cover positions in departments and agencies that were fully funded by and paid through federal grants and non-general fund monies, emergency and public safety positions, teaching positions within the Departments of Education and Human Services and jobs mandated by federal court consent decrees, Government House said.

"Our work to rebuild our islands must continue seamlessly and yesterday's Executive Order is an expression of gratitude and faith in the people of the Virgin Islands who have worked tirelessly to rebuild their homes and communities," Mr. Mapp explained. "Our work ahead is not a sprint. Instead we must prepare for a lengthy marathon to build back and, build back better, as we safeguard the future of our children and our children's children."

The governor also extended the State of Emergency for the U.S. Virgin Islands to July 2, 2018. The State of Emergency was first declared on September 5, 2017 in preparation for the impact of Hurricane Irma. It continues to be extended given the extent of damages to the territory's homes, businesses and infrastructure, according to Government House.