

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Op-Ed | FEMA's William Vogel Responds To 'Erroneous' Information In Washington Post Article

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Staff **June 19, 2018**



Dear Virgin Islands Consortium Readers:

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a [Washington Post quote](#) cited in the Virgin Islands Consortium [opinion piece](#) published on June 14, 2018.

The Washington Post erroneously mentioned that the "Office of Legal Affairs raised concerns about some of the costs" associated with the Shelter and Temporary Essential Power Program (STEP).

Let me first clarify there is no FEMA "Office of Legal Affairs." There is, however, an Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) which executes a mandated review of all large projects within the FEMA Public Assistance grant program. By law, all projects exceeding a cost of one million dollars must be reviewed and approved by the U.S. Congress and submitted to OLA for examination.

On May 16, 2018, FEMA obligated \$186 million through the USVI territorial government for STEP, locally known as the Emergency Housing Repair Virgin Islands.

This funding supports all eligible expenses under the construction process including, but not limited to, costs associated with travel, billeting of off island labor, and central warehousing of materials. To date, the territory has drawn down \$13.5 million in funding to cover completed construction costs.

The road to recovery will be a long one, but FEMA remains fully committed to our partnership with the USVI throughout the process.

Sincerely,

William L. Vogel,

Federal Coordinating Officer

Disaster Recovery Manager

FEMA-4335/4340-DR-VI

Submitted by FEMA on Tuesday.