

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI Recovery Anniversary Report Available Online Publication

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Governor Kenneth Mapp announced today that a first-year progress report has been published online about the status of the U.S. Virgin Islands' recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, Government House announced Thursday.

"This is a road map in terms of where we were, where we are and where we are going with the recovery," the governor said. "I was able to present a draft to top officials on my recent visit to Washington so that they could have a more complete understanding of our needs and progress. Our report was well very received."

Due to the focused and strategic efforts of the Mapp-Potter Administration, the Virgin Islands government has secured \$8.5 billion in federal assistance for the territory's recovery, Government House said.

"We are rebuilding much of our infrastructure with an eye to the future," Mr. Mapp said. "Resiliency and sustainability are what's critical." The report is available [here](#).

In September 2017, two Category 5 hurricanes devastated the U.S. Virgin Islands. The territory lost power and communications, roads were washed out, and more than half the homes were severely damaged, leaving many residents unsheltered. The economy came to a near standstill with many hotels and businesses destroyed and the Virgin Islands' infrastructure ravaged.

According to Government House, achievements during the first year of recovery include:

- Power was restored within 100 days of the storms
- Airports and cruise ship terminals reopened to commercial traffic within 60 days of the storms
- Public water distribution resumed within one month of the storms
- Almost 1 million cubic yards of debris were collected within 6 months of the storms
- Emergency repairs made to over 5,000 homes
- Critical healthcare services being restored through emergency repairs and temporary modular centers
- Students began staggered return to classrooms just 34 days after Hurricane Irma and began the 2018-2019 school year in modular and prepared classrooms
- Tourism has rebounded quickly; reconstruction jobs and new industry are contributing to economic recovery
- A key part of the recovery program is to enhance USVI's resilience to future disasters, through hazard mitigation and infrastructure hardening
- The Federal government has committed over \$8 billion in recovery assistance, from Homeland Security (FEMA), Housing and Urban Development and over a dozen other agencies

"As this report demonstrates, we have made outstanding progress over the past year, including the courageous initial response to the disaster by our residents, local first responders, businesses and non-government organizations, and our Federal partners," said the governor. "But rebuilding will not be easy, and a complete recovery will take years as we work to completely reconstruct some of the most critical aspects of our infrastructure. An incredible amount of planning and coordination continues to take place as we prepare our Territory for the vast construction and rehabilitation ahead."

"Virgin Islanders should be extremely proud of their recovery just one year after being hit with back-to-back Category 5 hurricanes," added Brad Gair of Witt O'Brien's, the territory's lead recovery consultant. "Having led many large-scale disaster recovery efforts, including Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana and Hurricane Sandy in New York City, I am extremely confident that the Virgin Islands will seize this transformational opportunity to build true resilience to future storms."