

The Virgin Islands Consortium

\$27 Million Awarded To USVI Airports By U.S. EDA For Parking & Transportation Center At CEKA, Expansion At Henry E. Rohlsen

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The United States Economic Development Administration, through the U.S. Department of Transportation, has approved a \$27 million award for improvements to the U.S. Virgin Islands' two airports -- Cyril E. King and the Henry E. Rohlsen.

Today's announcement came through Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, whose efforts in Washington have played a major role in the territory's approval of post disaster funds. The release appears to include contents of an upcoming Wednesday morning press conference at UVI in St. Thomas, whose guests will include U.S. EDA Deputy

Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs Dennis Alvord, Acting V.I.P.A. Executive Director Damiang Cartwright, and Governor Albert Bryan.

The award was [first announced by Governor Kenneth Mapp on November 2](#), and was described then as a major boost to the last administration's plan to expand and modernize the territory's airports.

The grants, to be administered by the Virgin Islands Port Authority, include \$20 million for the construction of a new parking and transportation center on St. Thomas and \$7 million for the rehabilitation and expansion of the airport terminal on St. Croix.

The past administration had said both projects were preliminarily selected by the U.S. EDA for funding as a result of a lengthy and highly competitive application review process. In that review process, then-Governor Mapp worked with V.I.P.A. to demonstrate that the infrastructure projects would not only support the territory's recovery from the destruction caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, but would also foster job creation, promote private investment, enhance tourism, and generate long-term economic growth and resilience.

Ms. Plaskett said in her release that the \$20 million grant for the Cyril E. King project is expected help retain 139 jobs, create up to 116 jobs and generate \$5 million in private investment. The Henry E. Rohlen project, which costs \$7 million, is expected to help retain 40 jobs, create 42 jobs and spur \$1.1 million in private investment.

"These important grants are significant to the residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands because they will allow the USVI Port Authority to continue promoting the wise use of these airports for the betterment of the U.S. Virgin Islands and its people, and to assist the government and the community in fostering and sustaining sound economic development when it comes to its airports," Ms. Plaskett said.

During the Mapp administration, Government House said the projects would improve the layouts of the airports to more efficiently use the available space, enhance the travel experience, and generate additional revenue for VIPA. On St. Croix, the airport project were to include enclosing the walkway to expand the passenger lounge space, refurbishing the existing passenger lounge, providing additional concession areas, and upgrading the air conditioning and other mechanical systems. On St. Thomas, a new parking and transportation center were to be built, and provide approximately 700 parking spaces for public parking, employees and rental cars.

Correction: March 7, 2019

A previous version of this article called one of the participating agencies the U.S. Economic Development Authority, when it is the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.