

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Heads To Seatrade In Florida, Then Washington To Lobby For Medicare Funding, Permanent Housing

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Ernice Gilbert **April 04, 2019**



Governor Albert Bryan will leave the territory on Friday and travel to Miami, Florida to participate in Seatrade, the three-day annual Cruise Global Conference, the governor told The Consortium Tuesday. Seatrade is the world's largest gathering of who's who in the cruise industry, and brings together cruise line executives, media, speakers, port representatives, ship builders and vendors to discuss most aspects of cruising at the multi-day conference.

Mr. Bryan is scheduled to hold meetings on Saturday in Miami, will stay for the Sunday reception and the governor heads to Washington, D.C. on Monday.

Relative to cruise tourism, Mr. Bryan eyes restarting the Long Bay Landing project in St. Thomas which was stopped by former Governor Kenneth Mapp. "We want to make sure that the cruise industry knows that that project is alive," he said. "We're looking for partners to build it.

Mr. Bryan's stop at the conference won't be long. "I'm not going to be there for the entire conference, I'm going to greet some providers and then I've got to go to D.C.," the territory's leader told The Consortium.

Mr. Bryan's trip to Washington will see him meeting with officials from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development relative to disaster funding, and with U.S. lawmakers as the administration pushes for an extension of some \$200 million in medicare funding [that was provided to the territory as a 100 percent match in medicare coverage in May 2017](#), but all of which has yet to be exhausted because of disruption caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the governor said.

"As you know we're still trying to get the extension of the 100 percent medicare coverage. There's some money left there and we have a fiscal cliff with the expanded medicare which is about \$200 million or so that we want to be able to get access to, because it will become defunct on August 31," Mr. Bryan said. "We want to be able to lobby Congress so we can have it until the funds are expired."

Mr. Bryan is expected to meet with Acting FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor to lobby for a program the territory was originally denied. "We want to push for this permanent housing roofing program that we were originally denied, but we still think that we have a chance to go after it, so we're going back there to see if we could get some more funds into the territory," the governor told this publication.

Mr. Bryan will be back in the territory on Thursday afternoon.