

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Acting Governor Roach Signs Executive Order Declaring State Of Emergency To Facilitate Swift Repairs Of Schools Before 2019-2020 School Year

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Students boarding school buses as they leave Man Up Conference 2015

Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach in his capacity of acting governor while Governor Albert Bryan [was in New York City](#), last week signed an executive order declaring a state of emergency of exigency for the Department of Education. Mr. Roach took the action to facilitate the swift procurement process for the repairing of schools territory-wide for the 2019-2020 school year.

The state of emergency declaration was first made known Monday not by Government House, but by the Office of Senator Alicia Barnes. In her release, Ms. Barnes said while she appreciated the issuance of the executive order as it facilitates a streamlined procurement process for necessary school repairs, she was concerned that it came late and falls short by not addressing expedited permitting by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (D.P.N.R.).

Ms. Barnes, a former D.P.N.R. commissioner, said the department's building permit process is a key component and critical path in the school repair process and should have been included in the state of emergency declaration.

Schools territory-wide have been in disrepair long before the summer, and parents have been complaining that not enough was being done to repair them. Now, under a month before school reopens, the Bryan administration is scrambling to fast-track procurement for repair work.

Meanwhile, the Charlotte Amalie High School [faces being either heavily restricted or altogether condemned](#) for the 2019-2020 school year because of structural problems. D.O.E. has not made an announcement on the matter aside from a statement from Director of Communications Cynthia Graham, making known that the department has been aware of the issues at the facility.

"We are aware of the challenges at C.A.H.S., and we are meeting with stakeholders and C.A.H.S. teachers and informing them of the situation. When we have a concrete plan in place, it will be released to the public," Ms. Graham said.

D.O.E. Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin is on vacation until August 12.

See signed declaration below.

[Read the original document](#)