

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Bryan Assesses Hurricane Dorian Response, Says Unpredictable Storms A Result Of Global Warming

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The eye of a Category 1 hurricane with 110 mph winds formed off the coast of St. Thomas in the afternoon. And by nightfall, power had been restored to much of the island. "I don't think people realize that we experienced a hurricane, and within the day, got power back," said Gov. Albert Bryan Jr.

The near-complete restoration of electrical service so quickly was among the things that went right during and immediately after the passage of Hurricane Dorian.

On the other hand, Virgin Islanders who did not have access to the administration's social media platforms and online news outlets were largely left in the dark during the

critical hours after the storm. Communicating information to the public after the storm "... was a little more difficult around radio stations," Mr. Bryan said.

Gov. Bryan and emergency response personnel held a conference call with reporters Friday to update Virgin Islanders on the government's response to the storm, the first major weather event since Hurricanes Irma and Maria two years ago. But AM and FM radio-silence meant large segments of the population didn't have access to information.

"We know that a lot of our community depends on the radio stations," the governor said. "I will take personal responsibility ... We have to make people prepared but at the same time we have to make them confident that we know where we are going, and that we have the ability and preparedness to respond to the storm."

The administration said it will step up communications with the public the next time around by setting a schedule for press advisories.

### **September is a long month for the Caribbean.**

The National Weather Service is monitoring a tropical wave activity coming off of Africa. "It's too early to see if it will impact the territory, but we do encourage everybody to stay vigilant," said VI Territorial Emergency Management Agency Director Daryl Jaschen. "Restock your area, your communications set-up. ... Be prepared, be vigilant."

Mr. Bryan said he believes climate change is causing unpredictable storms such as Dorian to become "the new normal" for the territory. "In terms of predictability of storms, it is becoming more and more precarious. We have never seen a storm behave as erratic as this, especially with the eye-wall forming right off the coast of St. Thomas."

### **Tarps and Other Needs**

Mr. Jaschen said Government House said anyone needing tarps or with other specific needs can call 340-774-0375 on St. Thomas and St. John and 340-778-5104 on St. Croix.

Red Cross and VITEMA vehicles will be going around the territory distributing tarps, buckets and cleanup materials, Mr. Jaschen said.