

The Virgin Islands Consortium

SpaceX To Bring Broadband Internet To USVI By 2021

Business / **Published On September 15, 2019 11:44 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **September 15, 2019**



SpaceX, Elon Musk's privately held U.S. aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company, which has been building a constellation of low orbit satellites to beam high-speed internet to the earth, on August 30 [requested permission](#) from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to "adjust the orbital spacing of its satellites."

This change would allow SpaceX to deploy satellites in "three different orbital planes" instead of just one, "accelerating the process of deploying satellites covering a wider service area."

"This adjustment will accelerate coverage to southern states and US territories, potentially expediting coverage to the southern continental United States by the end of the next hurricane season and reaching other U.S. territories by the following hurricane season," SpaceX told the FCC. The Atlantic Hurricane Season runs from June 1 to November 30.

"With this straightforward adjustment, SpaceX can broaden its geographic coverage in the early stages of the constellation's deployment and enable service initiation to serve customers earlier in the middle latitudes and southern-most states, and critically, those often underserved Americans in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands," the company told the FCC.

SpaceX said it already planned to "provide continual coverage over northern states after as few as six more launches." However, the company noted that it needs a license modification to accelerate deployment in the Southern U.S.

If the license modification is approved, SpaceX said it would need "fewer launches of satellites—perhaps as few as half—to initiate service to the entire contiguous United States (as well as Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands)."

As for the rest of the world, "the modification would enable more rapid coverage of all longitudes to grow toward the Equator, as well as bolstering capacity in areas of greater population density," SpaceX said.

The move could drastically change the landscape of Internet service in the U.S. Virgin Islands. While current internet providers lose service following powerful hurricanes and even when power goes out, SpaceX would be immune from such problems, so long as a source of electricity to power the communication device that links to SpaceX's satellites is available.

Unlike traditional satellite broadband, SpaceX's low-Earth orbit satellites would be able to provide latency as low as 25ms and gigabit speeds. The company said it must "deploy a sufficient number of nodes to ensure continuous coverage," and "have enough antennas in the right physical configurations to hand off signals" in order to cover the territories.