

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Seeking 30-Day Extension to Covid-19 Related State of Emergency

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Veterans being tested for Covid-19 at the Barren Spot Mall on St. Croix in 2020. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

Governor Albert Bryan on Monday sent a letter to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory requesting that the 34th Legislature approve a 30-day extension to the state of emergency, which is set to expire on Saturday, February 6, according to Government House.

The governor has asked that the current state of emergency be extended until March 8, 2021, said the release.

The territory has been under a state of emergency declaration since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in the USVI on March 13, 2020. The declaration gives the governor astonishing power such as activating disaster response plans and ordering evacuations, among other measures deemed helpful during a time of disaster. Mr. Bryan is seeking a 30-day extension this time compared to October and December, when he [sought](#) and [received](#) 60-day extensions.

Local law states that the Legislature has five days to act on a request to extend a state of emergency and the measure is automatically ratified if no legislative action is taken.

During an Oct. hearing seeking the 60-day extension, V.I. Dept. of Health Commissioner, Justa Encarnacion, stated, "It is critical for the USVI to maintain an active state of emergency status. It is essential that the Government of the Virgin Islands deploy accompanying emergency authorities and maintain access to federal benefits/assistance that arise from the emergency status."